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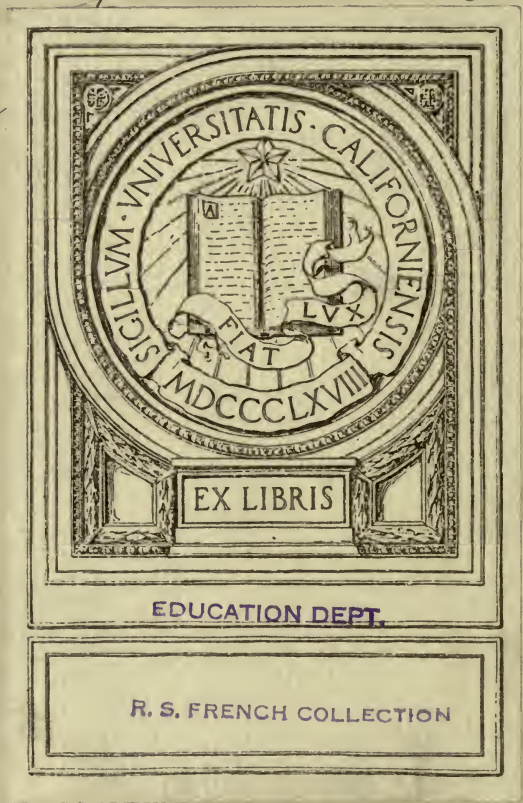
C O N F E R E N C E

On matters relating to the Blind.

HELD AT
THE CHURCH HOUSE, WESTMINSTER,
APRIL, 1902.

Presented to the Institution for
the Deaf & Blind, Berkeley Calif

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EDUCATION DEPT.

R. S. FRENCH COLLECTION



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REPORT
OF THE
CONFERENCE

On Matters relating to the Blind,

Organized by the Committee of the

GARDNER'S TRUST FOR THE BLIND

HELD AT THE
CHURCH HOUSE, WESTMINSTER,

On April 22nd, 23rd & 24th, 1902.



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"The Committee of Gardner's Trust for the Blind, while thanking those who read valuable and interesting papers at the Conference, wish it to be clearly understood that they are not responsible for any statement made either by readers or by individual speakers. The object of the Committee was full and free discussion."

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Report of the Conference on matters relating to the Blind, April, 1902.

N July, 1901, the Committee of the Gardner's Trust for the Blind, consisting of W. S. Seton-Karr, Esq. (Chairman), The Right Hon. Lord Kinnaird, A. P. S. Beaumont, Esq., General Sir George W. Higginson, K.C.B., Sir Gardner Engleheart, K.C.B., The Right Hon. Lord Belhaven and Stenton, and Sir Frederic Abernethy Burrows, Bart., considered the advisability of holding a Conference on matters relating to the Blind, and the following letter was sent to 58 Institutions and Societies for the Blind in England and Wales.

GARDNER'S TRUST FOR THE BLIND.

53, Victoria Street,
Westminster,
London, S.W.
August 3rd, 1901.

Dear Sir,

As several requests have been made to the Committee of this Trust to take the initiative in arranging for the holding of a Conference next year in regard to questions affecting the Blind, I am directed to inform you that they are willing to take steps for the organisation of such Conference, provided that the authorities of the various Institutions and Societies will co-operate.

I shall be obliged, therefore, by your informing me, as soon as convenient, whether the Committee of your Institution will take part in a Conference provisionally fixed for April 22nd and 23rd (and possibly 24th), 1902, to be held in London. If so, I shall be further obliged by your informing me how many of your representatives are likely to be present, and by your submitting to me, on or before October 26th, a list of any subjects that may be deemed deserving

of discussion, in order that they may be considered with others.

A list of subjects finally selected for discussion will be forwarded you in due course, together with a card or cards of invitation, should representatives of your Institution decide to attend the Conference.

I am,

Yours faithfully,

HENRY J. WILSON,

Secretary.

To the Secretary of the
 —— Institution for the Blind.

The response to this letter was so strongly in favour of holding a Conference that it was decided to begin to make the necessary arrangements in the autumn.

The following were then appointed, as a Consultative Committee, by the Gardner's Trust, viz. : Miss E. M. Bainbrigge, Rev. H. J. R. Marston, Rev. St. Clare Hill, Capt. G. G. Webber, R.N., Dr. F. J. Campbell, Dr. Ranger, Messrs. A. C. Cronin, W. Harris, C. S. Loch, H. Stainsby and J. Tennant. The Committee met on November 21st and was presided over by Mr. W. S. Seton-Karr, the Chairman of the Gardner's Trust, the Secretary, Mr. Henry J. Wilson, also being present. At this meeting the numerous subjects for discussion, suggested by the secretaries of the various Institutions, were carefully considered, and recommendations were made to the Committee of the Gardner's Trust, who finally decided on the following chairmen, readers of papers, and subjects for discussion :—

TUESDAY, APRIL 22ND. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Chairman—The Right Hon. The Earl Egerton of Tatton (Chairman of the Royal Commission on the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, &c., 1886-89.)

Subject: "Education of the Blind."

"The higher education of the Blind," by the Rev. H. J. R. Marston, M.A., formerly Fellow and Reader in English Literature of the University of Durham.

"Provision for the instruction of the Blind on attaining 16 years of age, and of those going blind after that age, having regard to the Act of 1893," by the Rev. T. W. Sharpe, C.B., late H.M. Chief Inspector of Schools.

2 to 5 p.m.

Chairman—Alfred C. Cronin, Esq., F.S.A., (Master of the Clothworkers' Company, 1899-1900.)

"Provision for 'defective' blind children," by C. S. Doch, Esq., Secretary of the Charity Organization Society.

"Physical Training of the Blind," by Dr. F. J. Campbell, Principal of the Royal Normal College for the Blind at Norwood.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23RD. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Subject: "Professions and Trades for the Blind."

Chairman—W. S. Seton-Karr, Esq. (Chairman and a Trustee of Gardner's Trust for the Blind.)

"Professions and Trades best adapted for the Blind, including those not usually practised, and the best means of helping the Blind to carry on the trades for which they have been trained," by Henry Stainsby, Esq., General Superintendent and Secretary of the General Institution for the Blind, Birmingham.

"Most approved methods of conducting workshops, including the question of wages, and of providing lodging accommodation for the workers," by the Rev. St. Clare Hill, M.A., Principal of the School for the Indigent Blind, Southwark.

2 to 5 p.m.

Subject: "Literature for the Blind."

Chairman—The Right Hon. The Lord Kinnaird (a Trustee, and a member of the Committee of Gardner's Trust for the Blind.)

"The need of more and cheaper Literature for the Blind," in Braille type, by Alfred Hirst, Esq., of Whitby; and in Moon's type, by Miss Moon, the daughter of the inventor of the type.

"Uniform Braille System," by W. H. Illingworth, Esq., Head Master of the Royal Blind Asylum and School, West Craigmillar, Edinburgh.

THURSDAY, APRIL 24TH. 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Subject: "The Aged Blind."

Chairman—Sir John M. Stirling Maxwell, Bart., M.P.

"Provision for the aged by means of Pensions, Homes, or otherwise," by W. S. Seton-Karr, Esq., Chairman of the Committee of Gardner's Trust.

"Statistics concerning Blindness," by Reginald MacLeod, Esq., C.B., Registrar-General.

"Home Teaching Societies," by Miss E. M. Bainbrigge, Secretary to the London Home Teaching Society for the Blind.

2 to 5 p.m.—General Subjects.

Chairman—Mrs. Henry Fawcett.

“Greater solidarity and interchange of opinion among Institutions, the need of a Central Bureau, and uniform plan of keeping accounts,” by W. H. Tate, Esq., a member of the Committee of the Bradford Institution for the Blind.

“Prevention of Blindness,” by R. Brudenell Carter, Esq., F.R.C.S., Consulting Ophthalmic Surgeon to St. George’s Hospital.

“Intermarriage of blind persons,” by R. N. Hartley, Esq., M.B., B.S. (London), Hon. Surgeon to the Institution for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb, and to the Schools for the Blind, at Leeds.

These arrangements were all carried out with the exception of the last-named paper, which Dr. Hartley was unable to prepare, as he was taken seriously ill. His place was kindly taken at very short notice by Dr. Rockliffe.

The following regulations were drawn up in regard to the proceedings of the Conference :—

(a)—That no person be admitted to the Conference Hall without a card of invitation, with his or her name written on it, or other evidence of having been invited. All cards are numbered and non-transferable.

(b)—That the selected Readers of Papers be strictly limited to twenty minutes.

(c)—That each paper, as soon as read, be followed by a discussion, and that the length of the discussion be determined by the Chairmen of the respective meetings, it being understood that, as a general rule, the time of the several sessions shall be divided equally amongst the subjects then to be discussed.

(d)—That any member of the Conference desirous of speaking on any subject in a Session, shall send, during the meeting, his card, stating his connection with the Institution he represents, to the Chairman and await his call.

(e)—That speakers be limited to ten minutes, but that this period may be extended, in special cases, at the discretion of the presiding Chairman.

(f)—That all questions in regard to limiting, if necessary, the length of the speeches and the selection of those whose cards have been sent up, be in the discretion of the presiding Chairman, whose decision shall be final.

(g)—That speakers shall address the Chairman, and confine themselves strictly to the subject under discussion.

(h)—That no one be permitted to speak twice in the same discussion.

(i)—That no formal resolution be moved at any meeting of the Conference.

NOTE.—The Secretary’s bell will give warning two minutes before the expiration of the allotted time and will sound again at its conclusion.

On the 20th of January, 1902, a copy of "The Blind" with information about the Conference and an accompanying invitation was sent to every known Institution and Society for the Blind in the United Kingdom, to 33 Institutions in America, and to the chief Institutions in Europe.

The chairmen at the respective meetings were supported on the platform on one or more occasions by the Right Hon. Lord Kinnaird, the Right Hon. Lord Belhaven and Stenton, Mons. Baron Fernand de Schickler, Sir Frederic A. Burrows, Bart., General Sir George Higginson, K.C.B., Sir Reginald Cust, Rev. Canon Mansfield Owen, F. Platt-Higgins, Esq., M.P., W. S. Seton-Karr, Esq. and Mrs. Seton-Karr, A. P. Beaumont, Esq., Sydney Gedge, Esq., J. Jeffery, Esq., L.C.C., R. G. Seton, Esq., A. C. Cronin, Esq., and others.

A letter was read from Sir Gardner Engleheart, K.C.B., a member of the Committee of the Gardner's Trust, in which he said: "I am very disappointed at not being able to attend the Conference on either of the three days, as I am here (Sidmouth) with a sick wife. I should have *much* liked to hear the proceedings"; and letters expressing regret at their inability to be present and wishing all success to the Conference were received from Mr. Matthies, Director of the Institution at Steglitz, Mr. Moldenhawer, Director of the Royal Institution at Copenhagen, Mr. Pauss, President of the Institution at Krefeld, and others.

MONDAY, APRIL 21st.

In the afternoon, by the kind invitation of Dr. Campbell, the members of the Conference visited the Royal Normal College at Norwood. They witnessed the working of the stereotype maker and printing, type-writing classes, gymnasium, girls skating, a short concert in the Hall, the swimming bath and also the lower grounds, where cycling, rowing, and a great variety of sports were thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils. The game of shep, sack-racing, three-legged races, stilts, &c., were preferred. The following was the programme for the afternoon:—

(1) Type-writing (Boys); (2) Pianoforte Tuning; (3) Armitage Gymnasium; (4) School Classes in Grosvenor Building: Type-writing (Girls), Objects, Geography; (5) Music in Gardner Hall; (6) Parade Ground—Free Movements; (7) Fawcett Gymnasium—Roller Skating (Girls); (8) Westminster Walk—Rocking Boat, Rob-Roy; (9) Armitage Swimming Bath; (10) Walmer—Sewing; (11) Windermere—Kindergarten, Sløjd; (12) Lower Grounds—Cycling, Rowing, Games, &c.; (13) Stereotyping; (14) Tea in Fawcett Gymnasium.

At 8 p.m. a Service was held, by the kind permission of the Incumbent, the Rev. H. J. R. Marston, M.A., at Belgrave Chapel, Belgrave Square, S.W. The prayers were said by the Rev. A. J. Young, the lessons read by the Rev. H. J. R. Marston and the Rev. R. C. Swayne, and a most impressive sermon was preached on the text "To every man his work," by the Rev. N. F. McNeile, M.A., Vicar of Brafferton. All the officiating clergymen were blind, as well as the organist and the members of the choir, which consisted of students from the Royal Normal College for the Blind. The anthem was "God is a Spirit," and was sung with much devotion, unaccompanied.

TUESDAY, APRIL 22nd.

The Chair was taken at 10 a.m., by the Right Hon. The EARL EGERTON of TATTON.

LORD KINNAIRD:

My Lord Egerton, ladies and gentlemen. As one of the original Trustees of Gardner's Trust for the Blind, my co-trustees have asked me to be their mouthpiece in welcoming Lord Egerton here this morning to take the chair. We feel that he is the right man to inaugurate this Conference, from which we hope great things, and on behalf of the workers in the interests of the Blind, I have pleasure in expressing their deepest thanks to him for all he has done in the past by giving his great influence and time and thought to this subject of helping the Blind, and improving the methods by which they may be taught to help themselves.

Then I am asked also to welcome all the delegates who have come here, especially those who have come long distances, such as Baron de Schickler, who in the midst of a very busy life has come from Paris, and, though he had several other pressing engagements, was determined to be here. Then there is Mr. E. Kull, Director of the Institution for the Blind at Berlin whom we welcome specially, as another of our foreign friends, and also Mr. Emile Chairou, of the Association Valentin Haüy, Paris.

With reference to the work which has brought us together, I suppose we shall all be convinced that we have every cause for congratulation that since the last Conference great progress has been made. One instance is that this is the first time, and quite an unique one, that a blind man will be able to take down the speeches in shorthand by means of a special machine, for the purpose of an official report. The Shorthand System for the Blind was invented at the Birmingham Institution for the Blind, and I am sure all blind people must be very thankful for this new venture for making notes of speeches, for it is one that may have a great development and open an important branch of new employment for the Blind in the realm of literature.

I beg to welcome you all here, and trust that this may become a memorable Conference, and that each one will come with an open mind ready to discuss any matters which may come up, and if there are any differences of opinion, we hope they will be expressed, as we all come to learn and to make the machinery for the welfare of the blind more perfect. We shall therefore help one another, I hope, by good suggestions during this Conference. For years to come we shall be grateful to Lord Egerton for having come to give us the opening address.

THE EARL EGERTON OF TATTON:

The Gardner's Trust, which has so wisely distributed its funds in various ways for the benefit of the Blind in England and Wales, was well advised in proposing a Conference on matters relating to the Blind, which should take stock of what has been done to promote their welfare since the Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind. Much has been effected for the improvement of their condition, both by legislation and by better methods of treatment in the training of the Blind. That report was followed by legislation, first in Scotland, and afterwards in England, dealing with the primary education of the Blind between five and sixteen years of age. Government grants were given on a liberal scale towards the cost of educating the Blind in certified schools, and the school authorities are now responsible for the education of all blind children, not being idiot or imbecile.

These Acts have worked so well that their provisions were made the basis of further legislation on behalf of "defective" children. The result has been that the education of the Blind has been largely improved, following on the efforts of Dr. Armitage and Dr. Campbell to introduce those physical exercises which give the Blind that confidence which they lack in pursuing the ordinary avocations or exercises of the seeing, and which tend to make the hand supplement the eye in the knowledge of form.

With regard to the treatment of the Blind after leaving school, as far as I know, the Saxon System has not been introduced in this country (it may not be possible to carry it out in exactly the same way in England) though some Institutions provide tools and materials for starting pupils in life after leaving school.

Henshaw's Blind Asylum has an outside establishment, *i.e.*, "outdoor workshops," where they find employment for efficient workers who have left the Asylum, thus enabling them to live at their own homes. They have 39 blind men engaged in basket-making and eight blind women in chair-seating and upholstery. The average of the wages earned by the men for a week is 15/9 $\frac{3}{4}$ per man; women, 4/3. The highest average wage earned by any one blind workman during the past six months was 26/6 weekly: the lowest 3/9. The earnings of workmen are subsidised where 8/- is not earned in any week, so as to make up this sum. The women are subsidised up to 6/- per week.

The training of the adult blind, and of those who become blind in mature years, is one which ought now to engage more fully the thoughts of all interested in the Blind. It seems very desirable that the age for the instruction of blind children should be extended beyond sixteen years. The Guardians can contribute towards maintenance of blind persons above sixteen years of age while learning a trade.

The Royal Commission recommended that the school authority should have the power and duty to give to all necessitous Blind a liberal grant to maintain themselves while learning a trade. Some of the Institutions have Scholarships for that purpose. There are some fifteen or more workshops, as recommended by the Royal Commission in the principal industrial centres. In Manchester, a new system has been drafted for Henshaw's Blind Asylum, and it is hoped that in various ways more extended help may be given by it to the Blind of all ages.

In Stoke-on-Trent and Wakefield meetings have been held to further Workshops for the Blind. The Gardner's Trust Committee have recently given grants for the instruction of 62 pupils over 16 years of age, at various schools and workshops.

Though many of the Blind are unable through ill health to earn a livelihood for themselves, yet every effort should be made to teach not only the young, but those who become blind in mature years, some trade which will occupy them and prevent them from begging in the streets and frequenting public houses. It is in the interest of the community that the latter class should be assisted by public or private charity.

The Guardians and local authorities have supported the Institutions for the Blind, as many of the Blind, as a class, are often in delicate health and require more care than ordinary

children. At the same time it is possible for blind children, when once they have learned the Braille type, to be taught in a class with ordinary children. The School Board of London have separate classes for blind children, and some attend the ordinary day schools.

The Gardner's Trust have offered four scholarships of £30 a year for four years, to blind children over 16 years of age who have attended the Board's certified schools up to 16 years of age.

We hope to hear what has been done for the higher education of the Blind, and for those who take up the learned professions or the higher teaching of music. (A young man, brought up in the Manchester School and afterwards at the Normal College for the Blind, has been recently very successful as a pianist.)

Much has been done to give a larger range of educational and recreative works in multiplying books both in the Braille and Moon type at a moderate price, and recently the Braille type has been adopted for all Oriental languages.

The recommendations of the Royal Commission respecting the sanitary measures to be taken with regard to the eyes of children soon after birth, and with regard to a circular to be issued by the Local Government Board, require still to be carried out. Such precautionary measures would prevent much of the blindness arising among children, and will be fully dealt with by Mr. Brudenell Carter, who gave evidence before the Royal Commission.

There remains, finally, the necessity for constant interchange of opinions and experiences between the different Societies for the Blind, especially those which deal with pensions, that their spheres of operation should not overlap, and conferences of this nature may help to bring them more fully in touch with one another for their common benefit.

BARON FERNAND DE SCHICKLER (Paris):

My lords, ladies and gentlemen, you must excuse me if I speak very badly. I am not at all accustomed to speaking English, but if the words are not exactly right, the feelings are very sincere. I just want to thank Lord Kinnaird and the other members of The Gardner's Trust for the kind welcome we have received here as foreign delegates. Many of us in France and other countries have had a great wish to come. This is not always easy when we have so much to do, but if we can come for a day or two we wish to do so, to prove our goodwill and sincere sympathy. Lord Kinnaird, a few moments ago, said that we have a great deal to learn, and I am convinced of it. I know already a good deal, for I have had the privilege of visiting many of your Institutions for the Blind, and I think I have learned many good lessons. I admire all that has been done in your country

for the welfare of the Blind, and all that the Blind have been able to do. Yesterday I was not here, and I could not go to Norwood College, but I know all that Dr. Campbell has done. We were astonished when he came to Paris two years ago, and he showed us all he had done. We all admired his work. I have seen other Institutions for the Blind, and I am convinced that at this Conference we have a great deal to learn. I am so happy to be here, and it is with renewed thanks and with my best wishes for the entire success of this Conference that I now sit down.

THE CHAIRMAN :

I now call upon the Rev. H. Marston to give his lecture.

REV. H. MARSTON :

As the remarks are all written in type, I need not trouble the reporters to do more than they think fit. I will, moreover, rather follow the substance than the exact words and phraseology of my paper.

THE MENTAL CULTURE, OR HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE BLIND.

BY THE REV. H. J. R. MARSTON, M.A.,

Formerly Fellow and Reader in English Literature of the University of Durham.

“ And this I pray, that your love may overflow more and still more in growing knowledge and in every perception.”—*Phil.* i., 9.

It would be a very pleasant duty to recall the names of departed leaders in this great enterprise. Those of the Revs. W. Taylor, Robert Hugh Blair, and S. S. Forster, most readily recur to my own mind. But they are only samples from a long list of many all worthy of honour. Dr. Howe of Boston, Dr. Moon of Brighton, Mons. Braille of Paris, and earlier than these the famous Abbé Hauy, were eminent pioneers in the higher education of the blind. But time forbids me more than this passing tribute.

I propose to speak mainly within the limits of my own experience, because I have now for some years stood outside technical acquaintance with the education of the blind, and I cannot affect a knowledge that is truly up to date. But if I speak from what I myself have experienced, both as a learner and a teacher, I may hope to serve the common cause which has brought us to the Church House to-day. I will not discuss vexed questions; but I will lay down plain principles which are fundamental to every enquiry, and to all practice which shall really be fruitful in improving the condition of the blind.

Let me, however, here thank the Committee of this Conference for the high honour conferred on me in trusting to me this opening paper, and let me ask all present to hear me with candour and indulgence, resting assured that I speak under the conviction that we must be at unity among ourselves, and must realise that each and all of us have in the last resort but one object—the emancipation and the elevation of the whole blind community throughout the world. This Conference cannot fail to contribute powerfully to this supremely important object, for like all its predecessors it must impress the public mind with the reality of our achievements, the earnestness of our convictions, and the progressive spirit which animates all our labours.

I.

Higher education of the blind means the culture of those who cannot see in the highest subjects. And it implies a sound basal education which itself was once deemed impracticable, but without which progress in the higher branches of study is quite impossible. The connection of the higher to the more elementary departments of education is close and vital, whether among the seeing or the blind; and when we insist upon the need of higher education and are met by objections to it, we must remember that the same spirit of opposition to the highest development in mental culture among the blind would, if allowed to triumph, end by destroying their rights to elementary education as well.

I know from actual experience the history of higher education of the blind in England. Of it I may say, in the words of Virgil,

“*Quorum pars magna fui*”

for, as the sequel will show, I, with my fellow students at Worcester about thirty years ago had really to make the very beginning of this attempt. Though I learned the elements of knowledge at a school preparatory to going to Eton, yet I had to take up and complete my education under the conditions imposed by loss of sight. Let me briefly recapitulate what would be a thrilling chapter in the history of mind. When a group of about half-a-dozen of us at Worcester in the year 1870 resolved to go to the University, we had a task before us which it is difficult now to describe. We were inspired by the example of the Rev. Norman McNeile, whose distinguished career at Dublin fired our younger ambitions. This was the state of matters in which we found ourselves. In mathematics there was no text, even of Euclid, and hardly any good diagrams. In Astronomy there were a few diagrams drawn by Mr. Blair. Algebra was almost wholly mental and in arithmetic we had the help of a very clumsy substitute for slate and pencil. In

classical studies matters were no better. There was no embossed Greek type. I myself first adapted Braille to Greek, with a set of signs which long ago have been discarded by everybody but myself. There was no Greek text of any kind whatever. Of Latin we had several books embossed in various types, but most of the types were very difficult to read. We had no Greek or Latin Grammar or Lexicon. Hebrew had no existence for the finger reader. Roman and Greek history we had to learn by being read to. There was scarcely any German embossed. French was abundant, good and legible, and I myself devoured many volumes of it, both in Braille and in old-fashioned Roman printing with accents. Our Divinity library was thin and narrow, but in time Butler and Paley made us a little richer. Our own beautiful and historical literature, both in prose and verse, had scarcely an existence in embossed letters, except a few selections from America, which included nearly all Milton and some very dreary sermons by Richard Baxter.

There was not a single volume of philosophy, or a text book in logic, which we could read for ourselves. Geography, the literary side of which is still so feeble and jejune, but which is intelligible now by the wonderful contrivances of the modern map, was to us among the most inaccessible of studies.

Such were the conditions under which, in 1870, we began the higher education of the Blind. Our object was to take as high a position in the Universities as we should have done had we been blessed with sight, for, it is needless to say, the Universities did not modify their conditions, or lower their standard in our favour.

These obstacles we had to overcome, and we did overcome them. Several of us obtained the highest prizes that the Universities had to offer, and after us a considerable succession of pupils from that college went up to Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and Dublin, and for the most part did very well. I would refer my readers to the list of University distinctions appended to this paper for illustration and proof of these remarks (*v. appendix*).

Now, I mention all this for several reasons. First, to show what actually has been accomplished, and in the face of how great obstacles and odds. For these results furnish a demonstration that the Blind have great patience, great courage, and great power of conquering their environment, and that on the whole their mental equipment is at least equal to that of the seeing.

Secondly, I mention them to point a warning. If till thirty years ago the higher education of the Blind had been so greatly neglected, as in fact it had, so that the Blind lacked the simplest instruments and most elementary books for advanced learning; probably a like apathy may now impede their admission into the

higher walks of life; and the like prejudices against them may have to be overcome as it was overcome in the matter of the higher education itself; and

Thirdly, I mention them to show that, just as in spite of prejudice and apathy the Blind were capable of attaining the highest rewards of knowledge, so they may be capable of rendering the highest service to their fellow-creatures in many departments of public work.

I am convinced, from what I observe and hear, that a great deal of prejudice still exists against the Blind, and I think that the recapitulation which I have just given may do something to remove that prejudice. All that we ask is the "open door." It may be that we shall have to force the door open. Let us believe that we can force it, and assuredly we shall.

II.

If you ask me what have been in my judgment the most aiding forces towards the higher education, and consequently what forces and instrumentalities I would most affectionately cherish, I reply these:—

First, Embossed Books. Without entering upon the burning question of types for the Blind, I venture to say that Braille, with all its advantages, ought not to exclude from our schoolroom every other type. In the case especially of Greek, and probably of Hebrew, a really good scholar must know the appearance of the letters of those languages.

Second, I would place the Braille slate—that matchless instrument for recording thought, which we owe to the genius of France; simple, manageable and cheap, and perhaps destined to revolutionise the moral and spiritual state of China and the East* more effectually than treaties or telephones. The

Third force in aid of higher education has certainly been the enlightened sympathy of such wise and benevolent men as the late Bishop Philpott of Worcester and the late Lord Lyttelton. The Blind cannot altogether fight their battle alone, and such allies as the last-named men are absolutely invaluable. The more we have of them the more is our success assured. The

Fourth force in aid has been confederate success achieved by ourselves, by each other's help, and the spirit of independence. And the

Fifth force in aid of which I would speak with especial gratitude, is the warm and heartfelt sympathy of the undergraduate world into which we plunged at matriculation. The undergraduates welcomed us with brotherly kindness, and have helped us continually as years have gone by. And now that we and they are out in life together, their influence as a real factor

* See the remarkable pamphlet, "Oriental Braille," just published, from the pen of the Rev. J. Knowles, late Missionary in India, of the London Missionary Society.

n favour of the Blind disperses through countless centres all over the country.

I now turn to enquire, what are the best subjects for the blind student to follow with the hope of really succeeding in them?

Leaving out music for the present, I give the first place to mental and moral philosophy, logic and psychology. And for this reason. The subject matter of these studies is within each of us; and the powers of abstraction and inward vision are *cæteris paribus* greater in the Blind than in the seeing. There is probably no limit to the success which may be achieved by a blind student who is gifted with a love for this branch of science; and there is no reason why he should not aspire to be Professor of philosophy at Oxford, or Aberdeen, or even at Berlin.

The second subject would be pure mathematics. Here, like Ephraim, I speak trembling, for the joy of this study I have heard of but shall never taste. Nevertheless the names of Mr. Laupmann and Mr. Warmington among my own friends and the name of Saunderson two centuries ago at Cambridge, prove that mathematics may be pursued with great advantage by the Blind. But even this branch of study must, I should suppose, be less accessible to the Blind than mental philosophy.

Third, I should place history and literature, and the careers of the Rev. J. J. Jones, at Balliol, and of Mr. F. M. West, also at Oxford, show that very high proficiency in historical study can be attained, for one of them took a first class, and the other a second class in his degree.

Fourthly, I should place languages, whether modern, classical or Oriental. This is perhaps my own subject, but I truly admit that the difficulties of mastering languages and literatures without copious books, whether texts or books of reference, or grammars or lexicons, is very great and requires specific aptitude in the student and an unusual degree of attention and power of memory.

Of natural sciences it appears to me that botany, anatomy and geology are all within the reach of the Blind, and may be followed by them with the hope of even adding to the sum of human knowledge. But it is necessary that the blind student in these subjects have ready access to flowers and plants, to bones and bodies, and to various earth formations. And these conditions are often difficult to realise.

Lastly, I feel sure that some parts of mechanics may be studied by the Blind with advantage, and I would advocate some experiment in this direction.

III.

I now venture to offer a few words as to the vocations which are open to the Blind after they have completed their education.

The following are absolutely barred to them: The Army and Navy, Surgery, Engineering, and several departments of the

Civil Service. But a blind person might conceivably become a consulting physician, although it is probable that he would not attract many patients.

There is, however, no reason why a blind man should not farm with success, or do well in several departments of trade. I know of men now thriving in Glasgow, in Accrington, and in Liverpool, in various departments of commercial life. Two of these are connected with music, but the third is a broker.

Journalism offers to the Blind a very fine opening, and the recent application by Mr. Stainsby, of Braille to shorthand reporting, and his invention of the reporting instrument have conferred a vast advantage on the blind community and incalculably increased their hopes of journalising with success. And I would appeal to the great heads of English journalism to adopt towards blind aspirants for their honours and awards, a lenient and liberal disposition, and to make it more easy and not more difficult for them to fulfil their aspirations.

Teaching is a profession also open to the Blind, provided they can teach. Here also I can speak from experience, for I have had dozens of pupils, both blind and seeing, and in most cases my pupils have got what they worked for.

We can teach the seeing well enough, and we can teach the Blind in most things, better than anyone else, with seeing assistants.

I would venture here to make another appeal. This time it is to the head masters of our great public schools. I wish that they would afford an opening for the blind teacher to take part in their teaching. And I wish that they would discourage among their pupils any reluctance to place themselves under a blind coach or tutor at the Universities. This is a mere act of justice, or, at the worst, generosity.

But Music is all round the sphere in which most blind persons can get most remuneration, and most renown. In tuning, and building instruments; in singing and playing; in conducting and composing, they are nearly on a level with sighted competitors, and their well-known love of music and aptitude for it, makes the balance between the blind and seeing nearly equal. Thus I place music as the vocation which, on the whole, could be followed by most blind people with most success.

Two great professional careers still remain to be noticed, and with noticing them I shall conclude.

The first of them is the Law. The careers of Dr. Ranger and Mr. Johnson, and of two pupils of my own, one a solicitor and the other a barrister, are sufficient to prove that the law may be followed by a blind lawyer with very great success. It brings them fees with honour, and I see no reason why more young blind men should not take up the law as their life work.

The Church is the other profession. Many blind men have entered the ministry of late years, and have succeeded well. But there is in some Bishops' minds, I believe, a hesitation about ordaining blind candidates. The question is important; for if Bishops refuse to ordain the blind, their action may drive the blind candidate into the ministry of nonconformity; or it may have the effect of making the governing bodies of nonconformity reluctant to ordain men who cannot see. From our point of view such a refusal would be very grave. It is therefore practical to enquire on what grounds such a refusal may be based. Now, any refusal grounded on the precepts of the Levitic law ought not to stand for a moment. Indeed, I should not mention it were it not that it may possibly lurk in some episcopal minds. Some Bishops, especially those of the extremer tendency, may feel a misgiving about the administration of the Communion, and doubt whether a blind clergyman can perform this service of the Church with due decorum. On this point I wish to give my own testimony. I have myself administered the Communion to thousands of communicants. Sometimes I have been alone, sometimes in company with other clergymen; sometimes in large churches and sometimes in small; sometimes in strange places and sometimes in places quite familiar; but never have I had a misadventure, either with the paten or the chalice.

As to visiting, I find it easy, and baptising and burying present no difficulties. Reading and preaching are now like second nature to me. There is, I am convinced, no sufficient reason for a general and rigid refusal on the part of the Church authorities to ordain blind candidates. Dr. Philpott, who ordained me, did so somewhat reluctantly, but when once ordained he befriended me to the utmost of his power.

The late Bishop Creighton, of London, was, I know, willing to ordain blind candidates, and his judgment possesses peculiar weight. Nevertheless, I would certainly advocate that the diaconate in the case of a blind man should be two years at least, and that he should not be admitted to full orders till he had given unmistakable proofs of his efficiency and acceptability. Under these conditions he might proceed to a ministerial career of the highest usefulness, and, having regard to the dearth of candidates for the ministry in the Church, it would be, I think, a misfortune if any men of promise were excluded merely because of their lack of sight.

I have only to add my deep thanks for the patience with which you have listened to me, to throw myself entirely upon your candour, and to invite the most scathing criticism of which your kind hearts and heads are capable.

THE CHAIRMAN :

If anyone wishes to make any remarks on this paper, will they kindly send up their names?

REV. JAMES SWINNERTON (Newport Society):

I should like to add a few words to that fourth and last profession that Mr. Marston has put before us this morning—the capability of blind men to enter the sacred ministry of the church, and the sacred ministry of those other bodies who do not conform.

I have had some little experience with blind Curates, and I can only say this, that I would to God that all sighted Curates were anything like as efficient generally as the two blind men that I have had to do with. I believe in the appointment of spiritual men for spiritual work, and wherever the spiritual faculty shows signs of development, as it will in the case of a blind boy of tender years, he should be used in the sacred ministry of the church of his fathers, whether it be the Church of England or any other church. I believe there are a large number of spiritual boys among the Blind in the various schools and homes of the country, and they should be watched and brought forward for this all-important work. Those who have not had the advantage of a higher education have been most successful as lay readers; I come from that great coal-field of South Wales where there are many colliers who lose their sight in the works underground, and I know of no more effective lay help than can be given by blind lay readers. There is a good sphere of labour for them in any large mining parish. They will go and stay not for five or ten minutes, but for the hour, and encourage the blind colliers to learn the blind type—not an impossible task. I have had a blind man of my own age, in his 50th year, write me a letter in Braille because I had recommended its study to him. But what we want for the admission of men into the ministry is the understanding of their capabilities and sympathy, such as is shown by a clergyman who has a blind son, and a Bishop who has a blind wife or brother. I have a blind son myself, and that is the secret of my interest in the Blind. I think one of the blessings which will arise from this Conference will be that more will be known of the capabilities of our blind men for the higher professions.

MR. WILLIAM HARRIS (Leicester Association):

My lord, I should first like to say that as I have not heard what has already been said, my remarks will not be an answer to anything that has been said. I should also like to remind you that I suffer from deafness, and therefore feel very tenderly for other people who are afflicted. I would tell you further—for perhaps you will not like all that I shall say, or approve of it—that for nearly 40 years I have been engaged in helping blind people. I have studied the subject carefully, and have visited the principal Institutions for the Blind in Europe and America as well as England. I only mention this to show that I know something about it. I have put down some thoughts, but they are so many that it would take too long to go through them.

I would ask you first to remember in thinking of the Blind, that we must distinguish between a blind person and the Blind. I suppose we are chiefly dealing with the education of the young. These young people will sooner or later have to live amongst those who can see, the sooner they learn to do this the better. I am not at all sure that it is well to shut up the Blind for many years in special schools.

From what I have read, teaching in the ordinary schools was advocated not only in this country but in Germany, France, and other parts, more than 30 years ago. The sooner the blind children go to live amongst those who can see, the better. They might be sent to a special school for the Blind from the age of, say, five to ten, and then go to an ordinary school. Some will tell me it could not be done. It has been done in Scotland and with great success, as recorded by Mr. Barnhill, of Glasgow, in the year 1875. I would also remind you that in the biographies of blind people nothing is said about any of them having been sent to a special school for the Blind. The blind people who get on well are those who have lived and do live with those who can see.

It is said by some that the Blind teach better than those who can see. I would ask you the question, who taught those clever blind people? Did they not learn from those who could see? Are they not still in a great measure dependent upon those who can see?

Take any of the blind people who are doing well, you will find that they have money, relatives, friends, patrons, and others to help them, and that they had opportunities which the Blind as a class have not. We must distinguish between a blind person and the Blind. At school, and after—just think of that for a moment! At school, the pupils are well fed, well clothed, well exercised, and well cared for in every respect, and free from anxiety. They leave school, and the case is usually entirely different. Do we not expect too much from them? Do we not expect these young people to do the impossible? If they have sighted friends and relatives they may succeed.

We have had an illustration this morning of the abilities of an educated blind gentleman. I remember at the College at Worcester, more than thirty years ago, that the training there was more like being with a private tutor than at school! These blind pupils lived there amongst educated sighted people; then, on going to the University they associated with people who can see, and here let me add that the Blind get their information chiefly through their ears, and not through their finger ends. They hear what is going on. The success of a man of business depends on opportunity as well as ability, whether he is blind or sighted; he must have opportunity as well as ability. Then another thought occurs to me; a great deal depends upon

money. Look at our schools for the Blind! More than two Institutions for the Blind, or certainly two, have recently ceased their educational work for want of money. We don't know what this new Education Bill will do, but if it does not provide money, the Blind cannot be educated as they ought to be in the present special schools. There should be properly qualified, certificated, sighted teachers, and they cannot be obtained without sufficient money. If you want a good thing you must pay well for it. The advantages of associating with sighted people cannot be over-estimated. At schools for the Blind, the children come out of school and walk round the playground with blind companions. Their minds are too much associated with blindness, blind teachers, blind companions! Let them run about with the rest of the world! The late Miss Gilbert, who did so much for the Blind by establishing workshops, was not sent to a school for the Blind. She was brought up amongst sighted people. One other thought occurs to me; the Committees of Schools for the Blind should send their superintendents to see what is going on in other places. Some Institutions have done this; for example, York very wisely sent their superintendent to see what was being done in the Continental Institutions.

MR. W. H. DIXSON (Oxford):

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, I should just like to refer to two or three points which were raised by the reader of that most interesting paper to which we have listened this morning, and the most important point appears to me to be this. Whilst agreeing with all he said with regard to the education of the Blind and to the ordination of blind parsons, I think Mr. Marston left out one reason which impels *some* Bishops to refuse to ordain blind men. To give a case in point; a friend of mine had arranged to be ordained by a certain Bishop, who shall be nameless, and while he was going through his theological education, the Bishop reluctantly wrote and said he would not be prepared to ordain him unless his family would give him an income of £150 per annum, in order that he should be perfectly safe if he should lose his position. Now that is an extreme instance, but not an uncommon one. It is no unusual thing for a Bishop to ask a candidate for Orders if he possesses a sufficient income to support himself, should he lose his appointment in the Church, either by the resignation of his vicar or through some other cause, and I would therefore like to ask the reader of the paper, if he speaks later on, what he has to say on this point.

In the second place, I believe that if a copy of Mr. Marston's paper were sent to every Bishop in the Kingdom, it would at least afford them interesting reading, if it did nothing else.

Now, to refer to one or two rather controversial points in

the paper which we have listened to this morning. I am inclined to doubt very much if it is worth while for a blind person taking the trouble to learn the actual shape of the Greek letters, unless he is going to be an expert. Of course, if he intends to take up classics as a business it might be, and indeed it would be, worth his while to learn the actual shape of the letters, but it seems to me that, in all other cases, to use a familiar phrase, the game is not worth the candle. I think that Braille has been quite sufficiently adapted to the use of the Greek to serve all ordinary purposes.

In the third place, I should like to make some reference to the question of teaching. While still not disagreeing with what the reader has said (for I know nothing about it, and therefore cannot discriminate), I should like to ask him if he is quite sure that a blind person, acting as teacher in a school of seeing boys, would have the same capacity for keeping order which a sighted person would have. Being a blind man myself, I am the last to rake up prejudices, but it seems to me that is a difficulty which is well worth considering. As to the rest, I am inclined to think (I am speaking generally, not merely in reference to higher education) that there is hardly any profession carried on by sighted people which the Blind cannot carry on, unless it has some reference to colour.

I did not come here with the idea of making a speech, but just to mention two or three points which occurred to me during the reading of the paper.

Mr. H. J. WILSON :

My lord, it may interest the members of the Conference to know that the last speaker is Mr. W. H. Dixon, who took second class honours in history at Oxford. I should also like to thank Mr. Marston for his valuable paper. He has raised many points, and I trust that we have all come here determined to do something towards making this Conference of real benefit to the Blind.

There is one point on which I wish Mr. Marston had told us a little more, and that is, under what circumstances, and how far, it is advisable to encourage blind men to go to an University. It seems to me that great care ought to be exercised in this matter, and that before going up they should have in view some definite profession. This has not always been the case, and sometimes after the degree is taken the graduates are at their wits' end to know what to do in order to earn their own living, and some of them at the present moment are earning a mere pittance, scarcely sufficient to keep body and soul together. I am thinking at this moment of one who would inevitably have succumbed if the Committee of The Gardner's Trust had not promptly and liberally assisted him. Then there is a danger—

and it is a real danger—that, when everything else fails, the graduates contemplate taking Holy Orders. This is the case, as I know, because I have been consulted in the matter. Of course, if there is a real sense of vocation it ought to be fostered, and not crushed out and wasted—we want more men like Mr. Marston and Mr. McNeile, and others I could name—but if this most solemn of all professions is taken up as a last resource, and as an inducement for bettering oneself financially and possibly socially, then I say unhesitatingly we ought to set our faces strongly against it. My remarks probably refer to a very small minority, I mean to those who go to an University trusting that something will turn up when they take their degree, especially if it be taken with honours. And here I may remark, parenthetically, that nearly all blind men do take their degrees with honours. These men who go up without any direct aim in view, are disappointed when they wake to the fact that even with their degrees it is very difficult to get an appointment unless some groove has been shaped out before they go up.

My lord, I venture to mention these points because there are difficulties which should be faced, and because the majority of the blind undergraduates are not in affluent circumstances. It seems, therefore, that the greatest possible care and discrimination should be exercised in encouraging blind men to go up to the Universities.

REV. ST. CLARE HILL (St. George's School):

My lords, ladies and gentlemen, I sent up my card to address the meeting before Mr. Wilson had made his remarks, so that a great deal of what I wished to say has already been said. But I should like to take this opportunity first of all of thanking Mr. Marston for his excellent, scholarly, and most helpful paper. The question of the higher education of the Blind is a very important one to us. Every now and then, young men and young women come to our Institutions with striking capabilities, and it is a most anxious moment for us who are in a position of responsibility to determine what we are going to do with them. It means to say, that if we make a mistake in the earliest stages in this matter, that young man or young woman's future is entirely ruined. At the same time, I should like very much to underline what Mr. Wilson said, and to say that it is a very serious matter to start a young man on higher education, such as taking degrees and so forth, unless we properly and fully consider what is his future. Utilitarianism is the note I should like to strike during this Conference. Let us look at everything with an idea of turning it to a useful purpose. I should very much like to hear what Mr. Marston would say on this question. Who are the young men whom we should help to go to the University, and what steps should be taken to turn their knowledge to a useful purpose in after-life?

I have no further criticism to make on the paper, but I should like to say that I believe everyone in this room must feel that Mr. Marston has urged us to give every facility to the development of the higher education of all young men and young women who come under our care, and I pledge myself to do the best I can. One of the greatest joys I know is the joy of tasting the luxuries of education which have been given to some of us at the Universities.

There is just one other point which struck me very much during the reading of the paper, and it is this—we know how ready and willing the Blind are to meet difficulties, and do their best to overcome them themselves, and I think we have heard this morning an excellent paper, which gives us evidence that the Blind are particularly ready and anxious to surmount difficulties, and I would here ask you, ladies and gentlemen, who could possibly have overcome difficulties more successfully than the reader of the paper?

There is also one other thought which struck me, and I was very glad indeed to hear it from the lips of a man who has lost his sight, that is, that the sighted are so ready to help the Blind. Ladies and gentlemen, it is a great comfort to all of us to feel that there is such relationship existing between the Blind and the sighted. God knows that those who have lost some power ought to be helped by those who have it. But it is a great thing to hear one so experienced as is the reader of this paper testify that, at all events, all through his life he has had the right hand of fellowship extended to him by those who can see.

DR. RANGER (British and Foreign Blind Association):

Mr. Chairman, it was not my intention to make any remarks. But there are one or two points which have been raised on which I should like to make an observation or two. The first is that question alluded to so usefully by Mr. Wilson as to blind men having a definite purpose in view when they go to the university. It was so in my own case; I knew very distinctly what I wished to do when I went to Oxford. Recently it has been my duty to assist in the settlement of a deed of trust in pursuance of which the award of scholarships for the use of the Blind at the universities had to be determined, and the charity commissioners, at my urgent suggestion, were good enough to allow such words to go into the trust deed as would enable the trustees to take into consideration, not merely the capacity of the blind candidate to collect information, to master the contents of books and to deal successfully with examinations, but also his general capacity for adapting himself to his environments with that particular sense of the practical and that degree of persistency and adaptability which is really necessary for any blind man in order to be successful in any department of life, whether it be of high, or moderate,

or of the most limited character. I think if that be kept carefully in view in assisting a blind man, especially with reference to the universities, if his capacity to be practical and to avail himself of the advantages of education and, above all, of the unlimited help of his sighted fellows—if that can be kept in view I think the danger to which Mr. Wilson alluded, would be reduced to a minimum—would become infinitesimal.

As to Mr. Marston's observations about the Greek type, that it should be an actual fac-simile representation of the Greek characters themselves is what I understood him to say, and that this is absolutely essential for finished and complete scholarship. That may be so: I bow to anything Mr. Marston says about finished and complete scholarship. But to enable a blind man to use Greek easily and for all practical purposes (except perhaps the occult purpose of the finished and complete scholar) I hold in the strongest way that the Braille characters as they have been adapted, are amply sufficient. I think that any funds would be very much better spent in increasing the stock of Greek in Braille than in producing any Greek literature in the original characters. I wonder whether Mr. Marston knows of three blind men who can read the Greek in its original characters with anything approaching comfort. I doubt it, nay, more, I doubt whether it is not in Braille that the Greek which Mr. Marston himself for the most part reads is written.

On one other point I will venture a word—the question of the Blind being teachers. I have had a good deal of experience as a learner, but what little I have had as a teacher convinces me that if a blind man will really devote himself to it, he can accomplish almost limitless success, as a teacher. The question of discipline is in my judgment his greatest difficulty, at any rate in most subjects. I have known sighted people of the highest university distinction who have not been able to maintain discipline, and I am sure that many of the Blind can do better in this respect than some sighted. It is said that a sighted teacher cannot efficiently manage a class of over 20 if each pupil is to have the measure of individual attention he ought to have. Suppose we say that the blind man's class should be half or two-thirds of that committed to the care of the sighted teacher. That would go a long way towards putting the two teachers on a level in respect of discipline. But in any case, it is beyond controversy that if a blind man has some little assistance from the sighted, particularly in this matter of discipline, he will frequently make a most efficient and successful teacher—indeed, his power of concentration, his single-heartedness, his devotion to the work and to his scholars, and his enthusiasm for it and them will oftentimes place him considerably in advance of his sighted brethren. The schoolmaster's calling, than which there

is none higher save that of the minister of religion, should therefore always be kept in view as one of the possible and proper professions for the Blind.

DR. GALE (St. John's Wood School).

My lord, ladies and gentlemen. I have been blind for 53 years. I became blind at 16 or 17 years of age, and I have had a lot of experience. I have seen heaps of hobby horses. Every one had beautiful points, but when you come to touch them, they get fidgety. They can't bear the saddle or bridle. What I advocate, is what is most useful to the general welfare of the Blind. I consider that this Paper bristles with arguments. I should like to have three hours' quiet talk with the reader. I am quite sure of one thing, and that is that he has made rather a mistake about the year 1870. Before that time Her Majesty the late Queen gave me the copyright to print Prince Albert's life in the embossed type; it was printed at the St. John's Wood Institution for the Blind, and I supplied them with the press. Then there was Geography. When I was Vice-Chairman of Dr. Armitage's Committee I had a book of Maps, and therefore there were Geographies, Histories and various other things before that date. I am not going to depreciate what the reader has done, but I do thank God I was not brought up to classics. I don't mean any disrespect to the clergy, my own son is the Vicar of Christ Church, Sutton, Surrey, but I do say this, that to bring a blind man up to be a clergyman would be a fallacy. Teach him a trade. The classics may be all very well for those who like them or are capable, but how many blind men will you find capable of learning the Greek alphabet? Why he would be wasting his time. Now as regards training them for clergymen, first of all they may not have the capacity, and I don't think there are very many blind who have. Next they want the money, and I don't think there are very many blind men who have that. Then they require patting on the back afterwards, and a great deal of patting and helping too.

Why I can remember when I introduced tuning at St. John's Wood Institute for the Blind, the Committee were up in arms. They said, "Why do you want to introduce tuning? They can never tune; where are you going to get the pianos?" I gave them three, and we have turned out some of the best tuners. We must remember that the sighted require education as well as the blind. They don't know much about the blind—I know they didn't 40 years ago. When I was founding an Institution for the Blind at Plymouth, one of the most successful in Great Britain, I met with an educated man. He asked me: "Are you blind?" "Yes, quite blind." "Can't see a bit?" "No." "Are you stone blind?" And you meet with them now. I want to know the difference between being stone blind and quite blind.

THE CHAIRMAN.

I think we must now come to a very important paper to be read by Mr. Sharpe. But first perhaps Mr. Marston has something to say.

REV. H. MARSTON.

I would much rather not, my Lord Egerton. I agree with all that has been said, except the last speaker, with whom I disagree *toto cælo*.

PROVISION FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF
THE BLIND ON ATTAINING 16 YEARS OF
AGE, AND OF THOSE GOING BLIND AFTER
THAT AGE, HAVING REGARD TO
THE ACT OF 1893.

BY THE REV. T. W. SHARPE, C.B.,
Late H.M. Chief Inspector of Schools.

Before approaching the special subject allotted to me, I will refer to two points in which very little progress appears to have been made in the last four years.

When the Act of 1893 was passed, I was entrusted with the duty of visiting on behalf of the Education Department the Institutions for the Blind, and assisting to arrange fair terms to be paid by educational authorities towards the maintenance of blind children.

It seemed to me the fairest plan to require such a sum as would cover all the expenses of their maintenance or training. I suggested also that they should hold out the inducement that the authority should receive, in relief of its annual contribution, such grants as might be earned from the State, on behalf of the individual child. At the same time the Guardians also required a warning that at the age of 16 years, stipulated by the Act, the children would not be fit to earn their own living, and that it would be to the interest both of the children and of the rate-payers, that the Boards of Guardians should be respectfully approached with a request that the maintenance should be continued for a few years longer, so that the scholar might go out into the world, able wholly or partially to earn his own living. I cannot gather that much advance has been made in this respect, except in few cases of more enlightened Guardians.

Again, I was, very early in my inspectorial rounds, brought to the conclusion that life in an institution does not satisfy the natural longing of older people for a peaceful home, that a colony of a few inmates in a quiet house is far preferable to the

monotonous existence and publicity of an Institution, and that the working hours alone should be spent in the Institution or trade centre. I came also to another conclusion, that if we leave out of question those who, by higher kinds of work such as music teaching, tuning, reporting, typewriting and professional duties, a large majority of blind women and even of men whose fingers are not strong enough to bend the thicker twigs required for strong hampers, can only partially earn their own living: whereas, if collected into colonies under a benevolent trade committee, they will be a far less burden to the community and happier in themselves in homes, where they may live a cheerful and self-reliant life. Contrast with such a colony some of our public institutions, where the inmates used to do a little desultory knitting and fill up the lingering hours with stale gossip, and, perhaps, quarrelling and bickering.

I was once visiting a certain institution of the weaker sort, and was suddenly called upon to hear a venerable lady say the whole of one of the longest psalms. The hearing entailed a grievous waste of precious time, and yet it was not wasted upon me, for the repetition called forth the first expression of interest and contentment on the faces of the bystanders.

Some of the more feeble in body and mind must perhaps be left in Institutions where better nursing and supervision can be obtained, but it seemed to me that large aggregations of afflicted persons tend to fall into morbid states and cannot without difficulty be raised to anything approaching a normal condition of health and spirits. It must be that all who give the least trouble are reckoned among the best inmates though it may be only a chronic state of apathy and indifference, and this condition is most fatal to all discharge of social duty and kindly feeling.

I have prefaced so far on the general condition of our poorer blind workers, because it touches the life of all, whether trained for some years or for a short time only in a certified Institution. My appointed task lies with that special class of workers who have become blind too late to master in early life that deftness of hand and rapidity of nerve action which require a long time for their acquisition.

Few things were more painful to me when I was first entrusted with the inspection of the Institutions for the training of the Blind, than the contrast between the merry child brought into the Home at an early age, and the scholar of 15 or 16 deprived suddenly of sight by an accident and brought back to the beginning of life again. Picture to yourself a boy or girl who had mastered the fifth or sixth standard at a good elementary school, finding all their book learning of little use, sitting on a bench and waiting for light to arise in their darkness. Truly a pathetic sight, and rendered more pathetic still by the merry laugh of the

younger children who have never enjoyed the blessing of sight, and are romping and bumping themselves against the furniture with an utter disregard of heads, elbows and knees. Now the first essential point is that they must be roused by gentle means from this state of melancholy resignation or hopeless despair, and brought to take an interest in life by means of some occupation through which some small success may be obtained. Happily this generation is now fully awake to the great part which early, clear, and distinct sense perceptions play in our future lives, that clear intellectual conceptions are not possible without distinct support from our senses, that morality or the conduct of life cannot be clearly grasped without clear intellectual conceptions, and that the great lamp of life, the conscience, must suffer from their absence.

If any doubt whether the cultivation of the senses and intellectual progress are mutually dependent, we can adduce a convincing example in one of the greatest schoolmasters of recent years. Mr. Thring of Uppingham never would allow the existence of a dunce. He would maintain that dunces were largely forced into abnormal dullness because the right method had never been tried of developing the sense perceptions of the scholar. Have you ever considered how badly the senses of most of us have been trained? Why, for example are we not taught to use the left hand as well as the right? One of the latest educational inventions is the method of drawing with both hands at once, reproducing the same form at the same moment with either hand with equal fidelity. Why are not our London boys trained to use the sight as well as a country boy who can see objects distinctly at twice the distance at which the London boy, used only to narrow streets, can have distinct completeness of vision. We all know the history of the great painter who was asked with what he mixed his colours? With brains, he replied, recalling the old sense perceptions. But I need not multiply instances to show you at what a disadvantage a boy of 16 is placed, whose sense perceptions have been poorly developed, when he is suddenly deprived of eyesight on which he has hitherto almost entirely relied.

Comparisons are often made between the sympathetic support given by the public to the Blind and the Deaf. Henshaw's Asylum at Manchester which devotes one wing to the Blind and the other to the Deaf, receives for the Blind much larger support than for the Deaf. The latter authorities maintain that the cause of this inferiority lies in the greater remoteness from the town; but I believe that the sightless eye presses itself upon the public attention much more effectively than the dull ear. Yet the totally Deaf is more to be pitied than the totally Blind if we consider only the power of acquiring knowledge. Anyone who has

listened to elementary lessons to both sets on some simple elementary truth such as the love of God, will have no difficulty in appreciating the greater difficulty of teaching the Deaf.

But to return to those who have become totally blind after childhood has passed. It is necessary first of all to give them courage to face their deprivation and to feel that they can do something in the world, and to rescue them from the fits of despondency to which even the most courageous are liable. One such example of admirable courage is well known to me. A man who, while managing an extensive business, slowly drifted into increasing blindness, as the result of overwork in the course of a severe industrial crisis. Though subject from time to time to severe fits of despondency, he was able to shake off all discouragement by throwing himself into literary pursuits, including Latin and Greek, and above all in providing copies of these higher books for his fellow sufferers. He insists always on evoking and fortifying their courage. Give them something they can do.

Now I should like to put before you how much these scholars lose in the ideal plan for the training of blind children. It seems to me that only the stronger institutions which can furnish good sub-committees may with safety undertake the entire charge of blind children from six to 18 years of age. Their training naturally divides itself into three stages. (1) The general education of young children to the age of 12; especial prominence being given to the acquisition of clear sense perceptions through the finger tips and the muscles of the fingers of the hand. Abundance of such exercises can be found in any kindergarten school. (2) A continuance of their general education, but with less literary work and a much larger amount of manual training: not trade training yet, but such training as will under skilled supervision call into play and strengthen in action those muscles and nerves which are principally required in trades open to blind people. (3) From the age of 15 to 18, or probably longer, a special trade training, with an evening class for higher literary work, and among this literary work I should like to emphasize the value of committing to memory passages of our noble English poems—even such touching passages as those from “Samson Agonistes” and the well-known “Sonnet” of Milton do not appear to discourage but to encourage them to feel what noble thoughts are open to their imagination.

Now, it would be desirable that all those three stages should be combined under one board of management, and I hope that such powers will be given to County Councils under the new Bill. At present the educational authorities of a district have the duty and power to assist from the ages of six to 16 and the full Board of Guardians after that age. If such bodies as

County Councils become, as they might some time or other, the one authority for the entire system of education, they will be able to carry children through all three stages. I hope no one will think I over-value the effect of early manual training. I have already dwelt upon its effect, both upon the intellectual and moral progress of our scholars, but I am not concerned directly with the first stages of manual training, except to point out the chief defect of those who become blind later in life, how much this want hampers them in their first attempts to learn a trade. A similar difficulty has been found in technical education, that its teaching is very much hampered by the want of a good previous general education.

The result of the dual authority given by law to one authority to the age of 16, and to another after that age, has resulted in three institutions at least, closing their doors to children of school age.

Their argument is based upon the consideration that the burden of the first part of their education is thrown by law upon other authorities who should not depute to others their own prescribed responsibilities. It is true that some school places have been lost, but on the other hand weaker institutions may constitute stronger bodies for the trade training if the earlier training were provided otherwise by the legal authority. It would be no loss if some other of the weaker local institutions gave way to superior substitutes, or to homes provided by the larger school boards, or a joint committee of several boards.

I am afraid that one reason for the backwardness of the "Home" movement lies in the strict conditions imposed by the Board of Education for the building of such Institutions.

The London Board with its usual readiness to meet the various calls upon it for generous treatment of afflicted children, proposes to build two Homes for 30 children each, one for boys and the other for girls, and to lay particular stress on a gradual increase of manual training, so that at the end of school life the inmates may be properly fitted to be trained for their special life work.

The Board would follow a wise policy if they formed an alliance with some trade school where they could pass directly from school to workshop. At Stoke-upon-Trent I am informed that the Institution authorities have worked up public feeling to the extent of providing "trade rooms" for the Blind, to be worked in connection with their school, so that the passage from school to trade work may be effected without a break. But as the school and the trade rooms are likely to be separated in most cases, the question arises, to which of the two Institutions should the older scholars be attached? I have no doubt that they should be attached to the trade room; the trade societies complain that

the children on leaving school are so feebly equipped manually, as to be almost useless for trade work. As to the separation of the two branches, Mr. Eichholz who inspects schools for the Blind urges the following considerations:—

(1) The day school system throws some hindrances in the way of useful industrial training between the ages of 13 and 16.

(2) This may of course be attributed to the want of co-operation between the school authorities and adult trades societies. The former naturally desire to obtain the highest intellectual result while the scholars are under their care. For this reason I would attach the older boys and girls to the trade rooms; provision is sure to be made for some substantial teaching in the use of the 3 R's, and it may be supposed that coming from a good elementary school they will not readily forget the general knowledge or allow intelligent habits of thought to fall into disuse.

(3) The need for some resourceful development of the labour of Blind women. They are ordinarily employed in making articles such as light baskets, knitted scarves, which command a very small sale, except among benevolent friends of the Blind. A blind woman's labour of the lower kind may be valued at about 1/- a day, and the labour of a blind man between 2/- and 3/- a day; the work of both seems to be slightly rising in value at the present time, perhaps owing to the better organisation of trade depôts.

(4) The apathy of the guardians in acknowledging their responsibilities to the Blind after school age. We require therefore co-operation of school authorities with the authorities for teaching trades; we need a more intelligent appreciation of the most suitable materials for the education of the Blind, including manual training. I may notice here that reading aloud, mental arithmetic and manual dexterity are below the level of other subjects. We need apprenticing committees and trade societies to avoid loss of time and wasted efforts, and more than all we need energetic enquirers, who will make it their business to conquer new industrial territory for the blind worker.

DR. CAMPBELL (Norwood College).

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to speak on one or two points to which Mr. Sharpe referred. One is with regard to the willingness of Boards of Guardians to help us in the education of the Blind. I have had much experience with Boards of Guardians, and have only had one Board refuse to help in the education of the Blind. That was some years ago; and this Board, after considerable correspondence, took up the work, and are now paying for two-pupils at the College. That is the only Board I ever had any difficulty with. At this moment I have 43 for whom Boards of Guardians are paying £20 per

annum. In the case of one girl, for whom there seemed little prospect or hope, they are paying all the expenses, she is doing well, and we shall make her an intelligent woman if she continues her education. I wanted to say this word in defence of Boards of Guardians.

With regard to the London School Board, and others who are conducting day classes for blind children, they are not all that is required. They do not give the children that physical exercise which is essential, and, in various ways, cannot accomplish as much for them as a well-organized residential school. Mr. Sharpe is right about dividing them into different sections, but in the great majority of cases they are kept in the classes until they are sixteen. They have not had the necessary physical training, which is the fundamental training in all work for the Blind. As music pays the Blind better than any other profession, it is practically sacrificing the best interests of the children to defer the beginning of a thorough musical education until they are sixteen years of age. Doubtless, Parliament meant to benefit the Blind when they extended their Elementary Education to the age of sixteen. If they had terminated the Elementary Education at thirteen, and given them the Secondary Education for the next six years, we should have reaped a great advantage. I hope the time is near at hand when the law will be amended, and we shall have Secondary Education.

I heartily support all Mr. Sharpe says in regard to getting more help for the adult blind. We want the help, and I hope it will be given.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Edinburgh School):

My lord, I have just one remark I should like to make with regard to a statement made by Mr. Sharpe at the beginning of his paper—that a child often becomes blind say at 12 or 14, and when he comes to school he finds all his previous learning of little use. I think, if I understand Mr. Sharpe rightly, he has made a slight mistake. I would take exception to that statement. I think when a blind child comes to us after becoming blind at that age he or she is sometimes a little out of spirits. But the despondency does not as a rule last very long, and as soon as the blind child has learned Braille (and with general intelligence that only takes from a fortnight to three months) his previous knowledge is of just as much use as it would have been under other circumstances. So that is only a matter of overcoming the initial difficulties of the new method of acquiring information; that, however, is a small matter. One thing I would emphasize very strongly, and that will include also a statement made by Mr. Marston in his excellent paper. Mr. Sharpe has spoken very strongly on the subject of sense perception. Now, that is one of the great things we should all attend to in the education

of the blind child. I myself am a believer to a large extent in the statement that sense perception is not born, and I am also a great believer in the statement by Mr. Marston that the teacher should above all things be able *to teach*. You will find a great number of teachers, who, in taking a class, are quite unable to see through the force of what appears to be a stupid answer. I say that a child rarely gives a really stupid answer. It may be apparently stupid, but the stupidity is often with the teacher and not with the child. The teacher has not the power of perception, and cannot see beyond the actual statement the child makes. If you take the trouble to enquire, you will find in almost every instance that there is some common sense at the bottom of it. What I am constantly impressing upon my teachers is that they should not always strive to inculcate knowledge nor impart knowledge by the same means. One child may be able to receive information by ordinary word of mouth; another one does not receive it at all that way, and has to have some special attention on the part of the teacher. That is, the teacher has to try and find out which channel is most open in that child's mind, and very often the dull children turn out to be the best. The sense of perception is one that requires a great deal of attention from teachers, and it is only the true teacher who has the power of discerning and developing the channels that are best open to receive instruction.

Then a word about the development of self-reliance. Dr. Campbell has just said that physical training is the foundation of *all* training for the Blind, and I myself am of exactly the same opinion. In regard to Board School Classes, they may be good but they are not the best, and we ought to have the best possible for blind children. They cannot possibly in these Board School Classes get proper physical training, and without it they do not get the self-confidence and self-reliance which is one of the first things we should try to develop. With regard to fits of despondency, I may be allowed to state a case that came under my knowledge. About the year 1890 there was an Oxford and Aberdeen Scholar, who had for several years acted as a Classical Coach in Edinburgh, and he became blind—quite suddenly I believe, in the course of about two nights. He shut himself up in a room for three months, and refused to see anyone. He told me afterwards that his whole thought during that time was as to the best means of committing suicide. He came to me, and I could scarcely get him to say anything except on the subject of his despondency. At last I persuaded him to touch the keys of a Typewriter with Braille letters fitted on the keys. I do not believe in that system now, but this was a long time ago. Presently he managed to learn the proper position of the letters, and by and by the Braille Alphabet. One day he said "I

cannot live without my Greek." He did everything in Greek—all his pet proverbs were in Greek. I said "Why not do as you have done before and return to your work? I will help you, and you will be a Classical Tutor again." This was in 1890, when it was very difficult to get literature in Greek. I got some books from what sources I could; some from the British and Foreign Blind Association (I may tell you that he had been a proof-reader for Macmillan's Classical Books). He copied out some most advanced works in Greek. At this time he was practically an Atheist; owing to his deprivation of sight he said he did not believe in a God who could be so cruel. I got the Gospel of St. John in Greek for him, but he would have nothing to do with it. He was not able to start in his teaching without having the twenty-second book of Livy. I said "I will write it out for you when the holidays are on." However, I was out of health and unable to do it. But I had a lady who wrote Braille for me, who is since dead. She did not know a word of Latin, but she said "I will copy it out letter by letter." When I returned after the holidays I put the book into his hands. He said "Do you mean to say you have written that for me?" I said "No, I could not do it, but Miss Hare did it for you." "Is she an old maid?" "No, a young lady of twenty, she did it out of pure sympathy for you." Then he said "Then there must be some God in Heaven after all." That gave him a start in his work. He found that there was real and loving sympathy in the community. He went on writing the Classics, and within nine months of beginning his work he occupied a premier position in Edinburgh as Classical Tutor, and was making more money than he did before he lost his sight. I think this is an instance that may be an encouragement for many who like that man, may have given up all hope; for he had been in a state of utter despondency.

I would just say a word with regard to Institution life for adults. I don't know very much about it; my time has been more taken up with educational development, but I do not think that living in Institutions is so injurious in the case of women as in the case of men. We have in our establishment a great number of blind women who are happy, and quite on a level in general intelligence with ordinary people, and we have one old lady who has been there 70 years and would not leave on any account. She prefers to live in the Institution, though she might do otherwise if she chose.

Then a word in support of what Dr. Campbell said with regard to the development of music in the Board Schools. I think the profession of music was placed by Mr. Marston in the first position. Certainly we should pay very great attention to it, as music cannot be developed properly in the Board School

classes. The only way in which to help blind boys and girls if they have music in them, is to have the taste cultivated early; if not the best years of their lives are lost.

MR. MELDRUM (Aberdeen Association):

My lord, the subject before the Conference was (under another name) discussed at Edinburgh in June last by the Scottish Blind Teachers Union. Its importance to the Blind may be gathered from the fact that each of the ten Societies in Scotland and each of the twenty odd Missionaries employed by them has reached the conclusion that this matter calls for earnest and immediate consideration. They have all found that they cannot continue to go out and in to the homes of the Blind without grappling (alas often ineffectually) with this added burden of enforced idleness, which the Blind in so many cases have to endure. This want of anything like remunerative employment is doubtless the open sore in the lot of a large proportion of the adult blind of Scotland. This—the common finding of the societies—was also the finding of the Royal Commission, and it may be taken that any efforts to find a remedy will be greatly aided by working on the lines recommended by the Commission.

Well the Commission says: Par. 70.

“ Besides those who have become blind in early youth, with which class we have previously dealt, a large proportion of blind persons become blind between 21 and 50, from accidents and various causes, and but few Institutions give industrial instruction to such persons, who specially deserve encouragement, as they are often those who are most anxious to learn and find occupation, and they as a rule work with more energy than those who have been blind from childhood.

It appears to us reasonable that in order to enable them to earn their own livelihood, assistance should be given while learning a trade in the same way and on the same principle as it is given to those at an earlier age during their industrial training.”

But the Commission had previously recommended “ that from 16 to 21 the school authority should have the power and duty of assisting liberally all necessitous blind persons to maintain themselves while learning a trade.”

This the School authority has not yet been empowered to do, and to fill up this gap so pregnant with mischief to the blind ex-pupil, Sir John Stirling Maxwell and other gentlemen introduced a Bill to the Commons in Session 1900. In response to a circular from Mr. Arrol, Glasgow, (who was a member of the Royal Commission) the Committee of the Aberdeen Town and County Association for teaching the Blind at their homes held a special meeting to consider its terms, and resolved as follows:—

“ The Committee desire to express their satisfaction with

the proposals of the Bill, and would be still further gratified if its provisions could be extended to all blind persons, who have lost their sight from disease or accident, after having attained to 21 years of age."

The Bill of 1900 not having passed the House of Commons, another Bill was introduced in 1901. This Bill has the word "may" instead of "shall" in its instructions to Parish and Burgh Councils, thus making it a permissive, and therefore a smaller and feebler Bill than that of the previous year. After all that has come and gone the question suggests itself—why make any difference between the treatment of the youths of 16—21 and their older fellow sufferers. Friends of the blind everywhere would be thankful for the smaller boon, but all would be able to rejoice with a heartier joy over a Bill that provided training and employment alike for the youth and maiden, man and woman, deprived of sight, able and willing to work if only they were taught to do it. Personally I have a hope (call it a dream if you like) which may be realised, that a man with a family, stricken blind by disease or accident, may be so provided at his own home. At present such an one sometimes has to leave his home if it is not near an Institution, and, sometimes, rather than do so, he will forego the benefit of the Institution. Many home workers earn a wage smaller than those in an Asylum, but it is what it is, with home and friends, and old familiar haunts and ways thrown in; and then there are possibilities open to talent and education. There are blind home-workers, who, in spite of their calamity, are maintaining their position in commerce, and in the learned walks of life. These have fought their way upwards, from turning a mangle it may be, or a potter's wheel, to competence, and even wealth.

The hardships incident to the present state of things is illustrated by the case of a man in our district who lost his sight some years ago. The parish minister took the case up very heartily, and arranged to have him sent to an Institution, then called to console the sufferer (who was a married man with a young family) with his remedy. Instead of being elated at the prospect of leaving home, and wife, and children, to live in a city lodging fifty miles away, he promptly answered that he would "die first."

The second item in his programme is not stated. only he neither died nor left his home, but bravely fought and kept the wolf from the door, his family as they grew up coming one by one to his aid. Many in similar circumstances would have gone down in the struggle, and such require the assistance that is now looked for from the legislature.

If the Bill of 1900, Clause 3, had the words "between sixteen and twenty-one" deleted, and the words "Capable blind

persons of sixteen years and upwards" inserted, and if, after the word "Institution," the words "Workshop or place" were inserted, then the requirements of the situation would be met, and the recommendations of the Royal Commission fulfilled.

In conclusion, I should state that the Union embraces Scotland from Berwick-on-Tweed to the Orkneys inclusive, having an united roll in June last of 3,153 blind persons. At almost every annual meeting for ten years back, it has petitioned that effect should be given to the recommendations of the Commission, of which your lordship was chairman; and now this meeting under your presidency will, I feel assured, encourage the Scottish Union to continued effort in the same direction.

MR. WADE DEACON (Liverpool School):

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, I was very much interested in Mr. Sharpe's paper, which, if I may so, seems to me to be very full of kindly common-sense. I am glad to say that, as far as Liverpool is concerned, we have had very little difficulty in getting Boards of Guardians to pay for the children when they are transferred to the school for adults, so that my experience is very much the same as Dr. Campbell's with regard to the Guardians. I agree with what Mr. Sharpe said about Institution life being monotonous, and I thought that what Mr. Meldrum told us of the little children rather corroborated Mr. Sharpe's argument than otherwise. It seems to make people apathetic, and we probably all know cases where the result has been that they preferred long years of Institution life to an active life in the outer world. I thoroughly agree with Mr. Sharpe that if it were possible it would be very much better to have the people in small homes than in an Institution. The difficulty is the cost. Those of us who have to do with Institutions know the difficulty of collecting money to carry on the work in the ordinary way, but it would be impossible for us to do so if we had thirty or forty homes scattered over a large area. Institution life is necessary under the circumstances, and we have to make the best of it. Now, I was very much interested also with what Mr. Sharpe said about the County Councils taking up the work. I hope we in Lancashire shall do that. I hope this Bill will pass, with amendments. The work would, I think, be well done by the County Councils, for we should have one authority to have control over the whole. We want education at schools guaranteed till the pupils are eighteen years of age, then followed up by workshops for the Blind. This I believe is the best plan to produce satisfactory results and enable a man or a woman to earn a large amount of independence.

I would like to say that, with regard to the Elementary Education of the Blind in Liverpool, it is carried on entirely in voluntary schools at present; the School Board has not taken up

the work. So far the arrangement has worked exceedingly well; still, I think it would be better if the educational work were taken up by the public authorities. We have done our best, and have received generous support. In my opinion, the greater part of the cost of Elementary Education ought to be a national charge, and not a charge on the rates. The administration might be a difficulty, but I would not put the whole cost upon the National Exchequer. I have much pleasure in thanking Mr. Sharpe for his interesting paper, which I thoroughly enjoyed, and which I am sure will be of benefit to us.

MISS I. M. HEYWOOD (Manchester and Salford Blind Aid Society):

My lord, I have been requested by my Committee to ask what provision can best be made for those who become blind late in life, and have homes of their own. They cannot be sent to an asylum because they cannot leave their wives and families; and even if they could leave home, they cannot afford to pay, and nobody will pay for them. How are we to provide for their education in a trade, instead of leaving them sitting idly at home, or letting them go out to beg? What is to be done with people aged thirty or forty, able-bodied men, who should be earning their living? We have sent three of our blind men to a practical brush maker, and he has trained them. In six or seven weeks these men have learned to make brushes really well and quickly, and now in one day they can make twelve brushes each. We give them 8/- per week whilst they learn, because they are not able to pay for their instruction, neither can they live on nothing while they are being taught; they will earn 12/- or 14/- a week to begin with. I thought this might be a good suggestion, but someone may be able to find a better way. The great difficulty is to get these people taught something which will make them independent. We have thirty or forty men unable to go into an institution, and they greatly need employment.

MR. DAY (Blackburn Society):

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to confine myself to one point in the paper, about which I really know something. For twenty-two years I have been engaged in getting children and adults into schools, and it is not the Boards of Guardians nor the school authorities that are at fault. Before the Act of 1893 came into force there were two people who had to be dealt with--one was the authority, and one was the parent. Especially in the case of children, the parents were always the most difficult people to deal with. It would take four or five years very often of the most persistent endeavours. At last we had to get some society to help before we could get the children to school. The same feeling exists at the present time. The parents do not like their children to go from them. The amount of abuse I have had at times has been something remarkable, and the moment

the child gets to be sixteen, you have got again to deal with the same two factors. You have got to deal with the authorities who will pay the money, with whom you will probably not have the slightest difficulty; the difficulty is with the parents. Until the maximum of the compulsory period is raised you will always have this difficulty.

Respecting the slur on the capacity of the Blind, it came from the clause which states that there should be no half-time. I mean to say that where the Education Department has given away its power of saying that if a child is mentally capable of leaving school before sixteen he shall do so. Even in the case of the deaf and dumb children, as of course they can learn a trade earlier than the Blind, the Education Department have given away their power of saying that a child may come home. A father who was blind had a child deaf and dumb, and that child had nearly got to be sixteen, and could have earned money, but the Education Department would not allow the local authority to say that that child could return home. That I think is the mistake. The compulsory period must be extended if you are going to keep children at school long enough to do them good.

Then another point. About the children who become blind from some cause or other when about 13 or 14 years of age. I have had a great deal of experience with school authorities in getting such children to school. If a child is 13 or 14 they will use every power they can get to evade sending that child to school, simply because he must come home at 16 if the parent insists upon it, and no good can be done in that short period. I have reported the cases to the Education Department, and it has always ended in the 16th year arriving first. Mr. Sharpe knows well how long a thing can be drawn out when red tape is resorted to, and the age of 16 is always reached before any decision is arrived at. When I had the privilege of giving evidence before the Royal Commission, I said that 21 was the lowest age at which the compulsory period ought to cease, and that there ought to be a graduated course of instruction. Twenty-one was the lowest period if they were going to do any good for the Blind afterwards.

One other point about the definition clause in the Act, which says that the definition of blindness now is the inability from lack of sight to read a school book. The result has been purely theoretical and not practical, for instance, a certain number of children who, previous to the passing of the Act were sent to school as blind children, cannot now be sent to school. Mr. Brudenell Carter has laid it down distinctly that any child or person who has less power of vision than half the normal power, is practically blind, and unless some mechanical assistance could be given, that person would remain practically blind. I think if

all school authorities throughout the country had to do as the London School Board have done, make the head teachers test the sight of children when they enter into school, you would find that there were a large number of children whose power of vision is not up to half the normal power. These children would have to go to some special school, where they would receive special treatment, and where a special Teacher, who would have some knowledge of the subject, was in attendance.

MR. STAINSBY (Birmingham Institution):

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, the subject of Mr. Sharpe's paper is of very great importance, and materially affects every large school for the Blind. In Birmingham we have 116 resident children; hence a constant stream are arriving at the age of sixteen. It is quite a problem, as Mr. Wilson knows, to provide for them. I should like rather to reduce the compulsory attendance to say fourteen years, and then make it incumbent upon some authority to be responsible for training children and others in handicrafts after the age of fourteen, no matter what that age may be. It is a very important matter, and I think partly answers Miss Heywood's question to the Conference. Now I will refer to the question of people becoming Blind after attaining to manhood. It is a most serious matter. We have quite six or eight men who have recently lost their sight. Each has a wife, and perhaps three or four children, and it becomes a great problem how we shall deal with them. I hope Miss Heywood will be a little enlightened on this matter after the reading of my paper to-morrow. Mr. Day has raised the question of partial blindness. Every school for the Blind now has something like half its children who are only partially blind. I think the time has arrived when we must distinguish between them. We must have trades and professions for the partially blind and for the totally blind; otherwise we shall half fill our workshops with the partially blind, to the exclusion of the totally blind.

With regard to the question of Day Classes, I am extremely sorry that I cannot go with such a great authority as Mr. Sharpe on this system. Some time ago my Committee gave me instructions to visit various Day Class Centres to enquire into the question. I went, having a mind as unbiassed as it is possible for one in Institution work to have, and came back with the opinion that for the large majority of blind children Institution life is best. And after twenty-two years' experience, I am quite convinced of this—that it is better for an Institution to take charge of blind persons at the cradle and finish with them at the grave. They cannot be left entirely to their own resources.

MISS E. M. BAINBRIGGE (Home Teaching Society):

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, I had no intention of speaking to-day, but Miss Heywood has raised the question about

what is to be done with men who lose their sight between thirty and forty, and I thought it would interest her and some others to know that for the last twenty-four years at the Workshop for the Blind in Kent we have had men just exactly of that class, some of them with wives and families, who have been allowed out-relief by the Guardians of their different Unions, not only in the immediate neighbourhood, but also as far away as Dover, Maidstone, and Sevenoaks, during the period of their tuition at Greenwich. I think people do not generally know that the Guardians have that permissive power. Though not compulsory, there is an Act (Vict. 42 & 43, cap. 54) which allows them to do so. We have never had any difficulty.

MR. STODDART (Glasgow Asylum):

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, with regard to the question asked by Miss Heywood with reference to the employment of blind people, I believe I may perhaps be of some service. We have at the present time in Glasgow a large number similarly situated to whom we give employment. With reference to the parochial powers in Glasgow, who are the equivalent of the Guardians in England, we have no difficulty whatever in getting about 10/- a week for each case, and they are enabled thereby, when living at a distance from the Institution, to come and lodge within a reasonable radius of the Institution. We take them into the workshops and train them, and after that employ them permanently. That means money, but in employing the Blind we stimulate the interest of the public in the class, and get both money and orders. Get the money first, and then a great deal can be done to promote the best interests of the Blind. At the present time, we are collecting by means of blind people £3,000 per annum. We are building very extensive additions to our workshops. When finished, we shall be able to accommodate 600 blind people. We mean to employ the most up-to-date methods, and are introducing electric power to drive the machinery and light the workshops. We are going to do what is necessary on the old lines of established industries for the Blind; the new ones I expect to hear something about from Mr. Stainsby to-morrow, but from nearly eighteen years' experience I know that really practical occupations whereby the rank and file of the Blind can earn money is a very difficult matter. We mean to adhere to those that have proved, in our experience, valuable. With regard to our manufacture of bedding, I want to try and educate the people of Glasgow up to the standard of our French friends, who re-make their mattresses every year. We will send for a mattress in the morning, and re-make it and send it home at night for 8/6. As people spend at least one-third of their lives in bed, there is no reason why they should not live that third comfortably, and provide a vast amount of profitable employment for a considerable section of the Blind who are placed at a great disadvantage in finding suitable work.

TUESDAY, APRIL 22nd (Afternoon).

The Chair was taken at 2 p.m. by ALFRED C. CRONIN, ESQ., F.S.A., who said:

Ladies and Gentlemen. Mr. Loch has been kind enough to consent to Dr. Campbell reading his Paper first. With your permission I will ask Dr. Campbell to address the Meeting.

MR. PINE (Nottingham Institution).

Mr. Chairman, before we proceed to the special business of this afternoon I should like to ask, as the Paper we heard this morning was one of the most important this Conference will have to discuss, and as the time was very limited, whether, if there be time this afternoon, the discussion on that Paper can be resumed. I think the two Papers this afternoon, although I do not wish for a moment to interfere with the discussion on them, may not take up the whole time, and therefore, if not, I should like to ask whether we can resume the discussion on the very important Paper by Mr. Sharpe.

THE CHAIRMAN.

In reply to the question that has been asked, it has been already discussed, and there is no objection whatever, provided that the two Papers that are our business this afternoon and the discussions on them are completed.

DR. CAMPBELL (Norwood College):

Mr. Chairman, I am sorry I shall not be here to take part in the further discussion on Mr. Sharpe's paper. It will be impossible, as I have to hurry away to a rehearsal.

With regard to those who become blind between 30 and 40 years of age, I always recommend that they should, if possible, continue in the business they were following before they became blind. I will give two illustrations.

A gentleman came from Melbourne to be married. After the marriage, the couple spent their honeymoon in Scotland, and during one of their excursions were caught in a terrible storm. The gentleman awoke the next morning totally blind. His grief and despair made him almost insane, and ready to commit suicide. His wife wrote to me, and I invited them to visit the College. When he told me he was corresponding clerk for a wholesale house in Melbourne, I replied, "You can do just as good work now as before you lost your sight." I placed him before my typewriter, and asked him to examine it. Presently, I pressed his fingers on the proper keys, and his wife exclaimed, "You have written your name." He was depressed, and a very unwilling pupil, and I gave his wife the first lesson on the typewriter. I arranged to get him a typewriter, and he practised until he became proficient. I said "When you get back, to

Melbourne take your typewriter and your wife with you, and say, 'Gentlemen, I must do business in a little different way from what I used to do ;' you go there, with your things in hand, and see what the result will be." Two years later, I heard the man retained his post, and the firm were satisfied with him.

A shoemaker, employed by a large manufacturer and dealer, had become blind. His fellow-workmen raised a subscription, and went to the head of the firm to solicit help. The gentleman said, "I will do something for the poor man, but I would like to write first to Norwood." Upon receiving the letter of inquiry. I asked the man to call and see me with his wife and children, if he had any. He came, with his wife and a daughter about twelve years of age. After talking with them, I said, "You have been making boots hitherto, in the future you must sell them, and let other people make them. Your wife must learn to keep the books, and your little girl can help you." I gave him some hints as to the arrangement of the shelves and the prices. The head of the firm called, and agreed to take a shop in a good street, to pay the rent for a year, and furnish the goods at cost price. Some time after, I met the gentleman in a railway station. He thanked me for my advice, and said the man had made more money since he became blind than he did before he lost his sight.

If I were working to get employment for the adult blind in trades, I should endeavour to teach them the special part of a trade which they can do the best, and get them employed by firms, letting the blind man do what he can do best, and the sighted people do the other part. I think various things of that kind could be done with great advantage. In regard to my own paper this afternoon, I should much prefer to have you all down at Norwood and give you a practical illustration, rather than trying to tell you in words. I will now ask Mrs. Campbell to read my paper.

THE PHYSICAL TRAINING OF THE BLIND.

BY DR. F. J. CAMPBELL,

Principal of the Royal Normal College for the Blind at Norwood.

In the early part of the 19th century, Peter Henry Ling in Sweden, and Friedrich Ludwig Jahn in Germany, were endeavouring to arouse public interest in the cause of Physical Education. When Ling first proposed to the Government his scheme for a Normal School of Gymnastics, he met with ridicule and scorn. "We have," replied the Minister, "jugglers, acrobats, and rope-dancers enough, without burdening the Treasury of the State on their account." Undiscouraged, Ling persisted in his efforts, and in 1814 a Royal Central Institute of Gymnastics was

opened in Stockholm. Three years earlier in a pine forest on the outskirts of Berlin, Jahn opened the Gymnasium which became the Alma Mater of all gymnasia afterwards established in Germany.

After the death of these two enthusiasts, there was a period of comparative neglect until about the year 1840. Since 1860 there has been constant growth and development, and the beginning of the 20th century, finds physical training an important factor in all educational schemes for the seeing, both in Europe and America.

Recently a Committee has been appointed to inquire into, and report upon, the best methods of increasing physical training. In Scotland, Gymnastics and Drill enter into the curricula of Board Schools in all the large towns, and the attention given to athletic games in the public schools of England is proverbial. In many preparatory schools, the pupils have not only drill and gymnastics, but are compelled to be present every half holiday during the term, to take part in cricket, football, hockey and other games, while the masters are on the field to superintend and take the lead in the sports.

It has been well said, "moral, mental and physical training, each and all, aim at developing the power of action, of acting in accordance with a rule of right and wrong, of acting intelligently, so that action and the ends of action shall be adapted to each other; of acting with the greatest economy of force; *i.e.* so that energy shall not be wasted in purposeless, roundabout, self-defeating movements. This suggests closer relations between physical, mental and moral training than are usually recognised by teachers. Since physical training aims at perfecting the body as an instrument, and rendering it the willing, prompt and efficient servant of an intelligent mind and sensitive soul, it cannot be gainsaid that physical training lies at the foundation of mental and moral training. The success or failure of our physical training, therefore, does not relate merely to the size or strength of the muscles, but is measured in part by our achievements in the domain of mind and of conduct."

This corresponds with the ideal of education as set forth by a Scotch writer.

"By education we mean the training of a man, with a view to make him all he can become. The education of a child is the bringing of him up in such a way, as to secure, that when he is a man, he will fulfil his true life, not merely as an industrial worker, but his own personal life as a citizen through his work and citizenship. The ethical end of education must be considered not only from the point of view of the growth of the mind, but the growth of the body."

If physical training is necessary for the complete develop-

ment of the seeing, how much more important must it be for the Blind? Shall they be handicapped with feebleness, awkwardness and helplessness in addition to blindness?

The surroundings of the Blind do not favour the development of activity, self-reliance and independence. Parents and friends find it easier to attend to the wants and requirements of their blind children than to teach them to be self-helpful in the common acts of every-day life. Among the poor, the mother, busy from morning till night, is thankful if her little blind child will sit still, and thus keep out of danger. Among the rich, a mistaken kindness leads the friends to guard every movement, and prevent physical exertion. As a rule, the vitality of the Blind is much below the average vitality of seeing persons, and any system of education which does not recognise and try to overcome that defect will be a failure. It is the lack of energy and determination, not the want of sight, that causes so many failures among the Blind. Even if a blind person becomes an accomplished scholar, a good musician, a skilled mechanic, who will employ him if he is timid, awkward and helpless? He must have faith in his own capabilities, and be able to inspire confidence in others. There is a prejudice against the employment of the Blind in remunerative positions, and it can only be overcome by giving the blind person a training equal to the seeing, with whom he has to compete, and an activity equal to all requirements.

By careful examination, it will be found that the Blind who are leading lives of usefulness are those who have not allowed their blindness to debar them from physical activity. Professor Fawcett, in his able addresses on Blindness, repeatedly bore testimony to this fundamental truth. The late Right Hon. A. J. Mundella, when taking the chair at the opening of our Fawcett Memorial, stated:—"As a member of the Royal Commission on the Blind, it has been my duty to inform myself of Blind Education in Europe, and I have been through nearly all the best blind schools, but I believe there is no country where physical education is so thoroughly carried out and developed as in England. It may seem to some of you that it is a source of enjoyment to the Blind, but it is a great deal more than that—it is a condition precedent to all education and all success in the teaching of the Blind, because, without confidence, courage and determination to go about freely in the world, there is no chance of success for a blind person, and that confidence and courage are given by the playground and gymnasium. It has been said that the Battle of Waterloo was won in the playgrounds of our public schools, and success in the education of the Blind is to be won in their gymnasia and playgrounds."

On the same occasion, the late Right Hon. Lord Playfair

said :—" There is a faculty which comes to the intelligent Blind which almost compensates them for the loss of sight, and is what I will call intro-reception, which means the power of taking outward objects and picturing them on the brain, and that faculty to an intelligent blind person becomes almost a substitute for sight, as they are able, by description of the things around, to believe that they see the objects. I say intelligent Blind, because those who are not intelligent have not that faculty in so great a degree ; in order to produce it, there must be two kinds of training—physical training and mental training. The physique of the Blind is generally about a quarter less than that of seeing persons, and it is necessary to get over the disability of the body which causes a great obstruction to the mental training. Physical education should form an important part in any Institution for the training of the Blind. I agree with Mr. Mundella that, if Mr. Fawcett could have expressed an opinion as to how he wished his memory preserved, nothing would have gratified him so much as to have it preserved by providing means for physical training."

The principles underlying physical training deserve the most careful consideration of all who have a practical interest in the affairs of elementary and secondary education. Its aims should be recreative, hygienic, educative and remedial. Physical training should include games for children, athletic sports, gymnastics or whatever develops motor ability.

The results which should be secured by such a system are briefly these, " Easy and graceful carriage of the head and limbs, a broad, deep, capacious chest, in which the heart and lungs shall have full and regular play, square shoulders, a straight back, fully developed limbs, and the power to execute with ease and precision such movements as are involved in habitual actions, and in simple exercises calling for strength and skill."

The following are some of the methods by which these results can be secured. The Pupils should have regular training in a Gymnasium, and the course should include various kinds of mass and apparatus work. Our Gymnasium, one of the many gifts of the late Dr. T. R. Armitage, combines the best features of Swedish, German, English and American apparatus.

But class training does not supply the needed recreative element. " Recreative games excite emulation among children, encourage their initiative power and accustom them to rapid and energetic action. They also exercise a strong influence in forming individual character. They promote good temper, self-reliance, courage under defeat, promptness and rapid judgment."

We should endeavour to give young blind children that spontaneous activity and love of play, which is the universal impulse of all healthy children.

The first requisite is a suitable playground, specially adapted to meet the wants of the Blind. Besides a free space where they can run and play, it should have a supply of swings, tilts, jumping-boards, stilts, char-a-bancs, skittle-alleys, etc. Any game that allows of sides being taken, adds greatly to the enjoyment and is a powerful incentive to play. The pupils should be encouraged to enter various competitions as walking, running, jumping, leap-frog, sack-racing, barre-a-pied, shot-pitching, tug-of-war, etc.

Cycling, rowing and roller-skating are not only beneficial, but most enjoyable.

We have multi-cycles that carry 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, and 3 riders. When a team were preparing to make the trip to Brighton and back, they were out for a run every morning doing a ten-mile spin, and taking a dip in the swimming-bath before breakfast. Finally they made the run to Brighton and back, 100 miles, in $10\frac{3}{4}$ hours.

Swimming can be enjoyed by the pupils of nearly every School for the Blind. If the Institution has no swimming-bath, the public baths are usually available.

In our climate, we cannot depend upon ice for skating, but roller skates can be used in all seasons, and our pupils find it a delightful pastime. When there is sufficient snow for coasting, that supersedes all other sports. We have two double runners, each carrying seven besides the steersman. The meadow is a quarter of a mile long and the incline sufficient to give a comfortable speed. At the bottom is a turn, and the more adventurous try to go around the curve, when an occasional spill seems to add to the fun. While the coasting lasts, the entire day is divided into periods, and all the different classes have a turn on the double-runner.

Another pleasureable form of exercise is an impromptu dance in the Hall or Boys' Gymnasium. All our teachers and matrons unite to give the pupils a pleasant evening.

In regard to the importance of lessons in deportment, I quote the following from Dr. W. H. Cummings, for many years a Professor in the College, and now Principal of the Guildhall School of Music.

"Department classes have been found indispensable at the Royal Academy of Music and Royal College of Music, therefore of much more consequence at the Royal Normal College, where ease of movement, graceful walk and gesture, are of necessity most difficult of acquirement by the students. The importance of this department of teaching cannot be too strongly insisted on; its value has been shewn in the improved gait and bearing of many of the most awkward pupils, and it is quite certain that whatever occupation may be considered suitable for them,

deportment must be practised in order to enable them to move freely and with the confidence of equality amongst their sighted brethren."

Our teachers lose no opportunity of joining exercise with fun. For example, egg-hunting on Easter Monday is anticipated by the children with delight. Attached to each egg is the name of the owner in Braille, and of the locality in which the next egg may be found. The eggs are hidden far apart, and the party troop up and down, back and forth through our large grounds, often occupying several hours in the search.

We have found that gardening furnishes pleasure, instruction and healthy exercise. Each of the young children has a garden plot. It is unnecessary to say that mustard and cress, lettuce and radishes form a favorite crop; but most of the gardens combine the useful and the beautiful. Our head gardener was much amused at the persistence of the little girls in watering their plants; he said, "It makes no difference if it rains all night, those little girls are out before breakfast with their watering can." Our teachers take a special interest in the gardens, and utilize them for cultivating the children's powers of observation.

An important element in all our physical exercise is the hearty co-operation of our entire staff. You can never rouse the dormant energy, and overcome the inertia of blind children, without ample facilities for physical exercises and the constant stimulus of a wide-awake, enthusiastic, devoted band of workers.

It was my good fortune to spend the first twelve years of my life on a mountain farm in Tennessee, under the care of a wise mother, who encouraged her blind boy to do his full share of the work, and have his full share of the fun. To the courage and independence gained in boyhood, I owe chiefly whatever I have accomplished in after life.

My early experience has influenced all my efforts to improve the condition of the Blind. We must give the Blind an education that will prepare them for active, useful, self-reliant, self-respecting citizenship.

By request, I append a list of games which are popular at our College:—

CHILDREN'S GAMES.

Rope-skipping.	Hot-pies (a variation of the above).
Hoop.	Foot-and-a-half.
Leaping from Spring-boards.	Hautch the Paddock (severe on clothes).
Prisoner's Base (modified).	Smuggle the Key.
Follow-my-leader	Shep.
Tig or Touch.	Hide-and-seek.
Knights,	St. Gothard's Tunnel.
Cock-fighting.	Simple, or the Endless Chain.
Tug-of-War, or French and English.	
Leap-frog.	

ATHLETIC GAMES AND SPORTS.

Wheelbarrows.	Sack-racing.
Ploughs.	Three and Four-legged Racing.
Chariots.	Pyramids.
Shipwreck.	Wrestling.

KINDERGARTEN GAMES.

FOR BOYS.

The Blacksmith.
The Shoemaker.
The Cooper.
Wheelbarrow.
Scissors-grinder.
The Farmer.

FOR GIRLS.

A Brook is Flowing.
Birdies' Ball.
Busy Children.
Forget-me-not.
Go to Sleep, little Thumb.
Cradle Song.
Pansies.
It is Lovely May.
Basket of Flowers.

FOR EITHER GIRLS OR BOYS.

Thumbs and Fingers say "Good Morning."
Good Morning, Merry Sunshine.
Do you know how many Stars.
The Pretty Moon.
Merry Brown Thrush.
Jack Frost.
Five Little Squirrels.
Tommy Bumble.
Song of the Weather.
To and Fro.
Wake, says the Sunshine.
Come Little Leaves.
And others.

THE CHAIRMAN :

If any lady or gentleman wishes to speak, perhaps they will send up their cards.

DR. CAMPBELL :

Before leaving the platform, I wish to make a statement in regard to the recommendations published by the New Contractions Committee. Miss Bell, Mr. Pearson, and I were asked to join the Committee, and were glad to do so, as we were interested in the subject. One introductory meeting of the Committee was held, after which two members worked for a year and a half. Then another meeting of the Committee was called, and the recommendations sent out without the dissenting members having an opportunity to discuss their merits or demerits. Therefore, I asked to have my name withdrawn from the Contractions Committee.

MR. WILLIAM HARRIS (Leicester Association) :

I address you this second time to-day with greater confidence, because I am not going to give you my own opinions, but facts, collected from other countries as well as this. I propose to read short extracts from official documents. I will begin with America; with the Official Report of the Indiana Institution for the Blind for the year 1884. The date is rather far back, but I think the facts are about the same now; if they are not, perhaps there is someone here who will correct me, and favour us with more modern facts. On page 25 of that Official Report, the

physician says:—"It may be well to state, at the outset, that general observation and experience point to the belief that the blind, as a class, have less vitality than those who have sight, and that this opinion appears to be amply confirmed by statistics. The records of many of the long established Institutes for the Blind clearly show that such individuals are not only more subject to sickness, but that their mortality is at least ten per cent. higher than the average of persons of the same age and otherwise similarly circumstanced.

As a factor this want of vitality appears to be associated with blindness, both as to cause and effect. While the want of vitality is one predisposing cause of blindness, it is equally evident that a lack of vitality is in consequence of being blind, which leads to a more sedentary life than is usual with those who are not deprived of vision. For these reasons it has been very truly said 'There are many who are not born blind, who are born to become blind.' On page 27 of that report we read: "While only a small proportion of the pupils have been actually sick during the School term, yet many of them have required iron and other tonics or constitutional remedies to build up their general health. To assist in these results, and to improve their physical development, such hygienic measures as bathing, the influence of sunlight and open air, or gymnastic exercise have been systematically resorted to, and persistently but judiciously enforced." So much for the American statement which bears on our subject.

Now we will take Paris in the year 1888. A paper called "Progress," of May in that year, edited by the late Dr. Armitage, says:—"Mr. Martin, the director of the National Institution for the Young Blind in Paris, has lately published a report of great interest. It deals with all the pupils who have left between 1876 and 1886. The total number was 370, of whom 30 died; 92 were sent home on account of illness, or want of sufficient capacity; 45 were discharged for various reasons; 15 were removed by their friends before completion of their education; 188 left after passing the full course, of these 7 have completely failed, 17 follow no calling, being comfortably off; the number of the others who exercise some calling is 181, including a few who left before the completion of their course; of these 147 are organists, tuners and teachers, and almost all these are fully self-supporting."

I think I might stop there, for it does not deal further with health. Now we will look at England. The Official Report of the Royal Normal College for 1885 and 1886, page 16, states:—"In all, 130 pupils have had sufficient training to enable them to undertake business for themselves, and may be regarded as a practical test of our work. Of the 130, three are failures, 16

have only recently left the college and are working up business connections, 19 are fairly successful, 81 are highly successful, and 11 are deceased. Of the 11, five were among our very best successes, two were moderately successful, and four on account of ill-health were unable to enter on business; consequently of the 130, 86 have been highly successful, 21 only moderately successful, (of the 21 about two-thirds were self-sustaining, while one-third have a hard struggle to make ends meet); 16 who have recently left the College are already earning something, and their work is increasing; four from ill-health were unable to do business, and only three were entire failures. A number of the others came to the College for a time, but as they did not go through a course of training, they cannot be counted as affecting the practical results, as will be seen from the following resumé:—19 were discontinued because character and conduct were unsatisfactory; five died during their pupilage; 26 left from various causes, some of them had very excellent ability, but preferred to throw themselves on the world rather than undergo a sufficient training to enable them to overcome the difficulties arising from their blindness; two were discontinued on account of improved sight; five were obliged to give up on account of deafness; and 15 for ill-health; 15 came for special purposes, and only remained to accomplish the objects for which they came." The ill-health of blind people is the result of their condition; we must not expect too much from them. It is a mistake to tell them that they can be made independent; no one is independent, and the Blind least of all. They want kind and loving friends who can see, to help them; then they get along; but by themselves, they, alas, suffer grievously. We must be kind to them, and help them. Some talk about competing with those who can see—it can't be done by the Blind as a class. Certain individual blind persons do get along very comfortably and happily, but these generally have homes and friends, wives and children, and money, and live with those who can see; they get along happily, but, alas, there are hundreds who do not. And even those who have been highly trained, often have no opportunity of using their abilities. I have in my pocket two letters written to me by blind persons within the last six months, asking me what I can do to help them; they are highly qualified. I said I much regret that I could not tell them where to find employment.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Edinburgh School);

Mr. Chairman, I must apologise for appearing a second time so soon, but I am exceedingly anxious that this Conference should be made one that will bring about some practical good. I would suggest that there may be some here who perhaps do not feel inclined to speak: but they may have an idea, and sometimes the apparently most outlandish ideas are the very

things that are required to stir up that criticism which results in something practical being done; so I hope that everyone who has an idea of any kind will not be afraid to bring it out. There is no doubt of the absolute truth of what Dr. Campbell said, that it is lack of energy and not lack of sight that prevents so many of the Blind from becoming successes. In connection with Dr. Campbell's paper generally, I would say I have enjoyed it immensely, and I am sure the Conference is very grateful to him. I should like to emphasize one point, and that is, the wonderful moral effect of physical training. We have a great deal of trouble sometimes in keeping blind children out of mischief. The seeing laity can scarcely believe this statement, and they say, "How can *blind* children get into mischief?" Well, if it is possible to imagine it, I say that a blind child will get into mischief more quickly and more frequently than a seeing child. The best way, as all true teachers know, of keeping a child from doing wrong is to keep it employed. If we can give our boys and girls some healthful amusements and recreations out of school hours, we shall go a great way towards preventing them getting into trouble both moral and physical. I do not think sufficient attention is paid in Blind Institutions to teaching the children how to play. There are a great many games which blind children can play quite as well as the sighted. Some people laugh when you speak of blind boys playing football, but it is quite easy to arrange a football ground so that blind children can enjoy it. At West Craigmillar we have utilised a piece of waste ground nearly one hundred yards in extent, and laid the upper part as a running path and the lower part as a football ground. I do not know if there is another path like it in the country. Blind boys, and girls too, as you all know, have a great fear of running unless they are so circumstanced that they will not run against some obstacle. In order to get over this difficulty, I stretched wires from one end of the course to the other, between posts firmly fixed into the ground; and on that wire a ring, carrying a small chain and a handle. For a race, we place four girls or boys beside the wires, they each take a handle, and away they go on 100 yards, quarter or half-mile races, and I can assure you that there is a remarkable difference in the physique of some of these children since they began to run. We have only had it in operation about six months. The difference in the physique is something surprising. I would recommend this as a very simple and easy means of providing outdoor recreation. If you can get something that enables the blind children to vie with each other, it is a great incentive to them to play, and this any of you who have schools or Institutions where there is a little waste ground can do. It does not take up very much room, the cost is small, and it gives a very great deal of confidence.

One other thing—and that is with regard to the peculiar movements and eccentric habits which we so frequently mark in blind children when they come to school. They are corrected in nearly every instance by judicious physical training. Now, with regard to School Board Classes. A year or two ago, a little boy, nine years of age, came to me who had the very common habit of moving his head from side to side and shaking his hand backwards and forwards before his eyes. I spoke to his mother about it, and said we should have some difficulty in getting him out of the habit. She said, "Well, his last teacher was very kind, she knew that Willie was very fond of doing that, and she used to put him up to the window, so that he could amuse himself in that way." Now, while this may be an exaggerated form of the inefficiency of School Board Classes, there is no doubt that they lack the systematic method of eradicating these imbecile movements so common amongst the Blind. We cannot pay too much attention to the advice that Dr. Campbell has given in his paper. I sincerely hope that many others who have suggestions or ideas will come forward, so that the Conference may be a real benefit to all those who are engaged in the education of the Blind.

MR. MAIN (Birmingham Institution):

Mr. Chairman, I am thoroughly in accord with all that Dr. Campbell has said with regard to physical training. For many years after I came to the Institution at Edgbaston we had nothing of the kind, and the pupils used either to sit about on benches in the playground, or amuse themselves by seeing which were the stronger. The first thing they did when they came out of school was just to grasp each other and try to throw each other down. But some years ago we had a splendid gymnasium built, which I dare say many of those present have seen, and I can bear testimony to the fact that since then the pupils have been altogether different; there has been a great deal more life and animation about them. But what I wished to speak about for a moment was this, that Dr. Campbell's circumstances are altogether different from ours, and I daresay from many of the other Institutions in the country, inasmuch as he has those splendid grounds. Now I should like to know what Dr. Campbell would do, or what others would do, if the only playground they had was about twice or three times the size of this room, covered with gravel? Now those exercises and recreations which Dr. Campbell has alluded to are out of the question, so I should be exceedingly glad if any gentlemen present have any ideas which they could offer with regard to recreations that might be practised in such a limited space. I can quite understand that if we had a lot of ground to spare we could do a great many things, but with our circumscribed area I really don't know that we can do much more than we are doing already. We have football in our yard, and you can imagine

what kind of playing it is. But there is one thing about that game which I think prevents it from being successful as a game for the Blind, and that is that it is just those who have a good deal of sight who have the monopoly in it. I hardly ever see those who are totally blind join in the game. What they have to do instead is to get into some corner out of the way of the ball. Now I think we want games in which all of them can take part if they are to be of real use to them. Therefore I should be very glad if any member of this Conference could suggest games which would not take up a large amount of space. We have a little skittle alley, but it is of course very small, and we have a little gymnasium in the yard, to which the pupils can go at any time they like. Of course they find a good deal of amusement there, and not only amusement but they are able also to practise what they learn from their Instructor on his weekly visit in the in-door gymnasium.

DR. CAMPBELL :

I should say don't wait till to-night to go out and beg sufficient money to buy another playground.

MR. STAINSBY (Birmingham Institution):

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Main quite omitted to tell you that we have bought another site of about 10 acres, so that our playgrounds in future will, I hope, not be quite so circumscribed. As Mr. Main has just said, with an ordinary football blind people cannot play, and some years ago I experimented, but unsuccessfully, with a cane football. We had it made in two parts and joined together, and inside that I put a dry battery and an electric bell. The battery unfortunately soon gave out, and the bell was so delicate that it did not last long. Some might say, why not put an ordinary mechanical bell inside the football; I think you will find if you experiment that while the football is in the air the bell ceases to ring, and consequently the players do not know what direction it is taking. I do wish someone would give us a hint as to a good football for the Blind.

MISS HOLDEN (Bradford):

Mr. Chairman, one gentleman has just said that Dr. Campbell is an exception in having so much ground for physical purposes, but he has not always had it, and if it had not been for his energy he would not possess it now; so there is a possibility of anyone else with an equal amount of energy owning equal facilities.

Then another statement has been made: "that the Blind competing with the sighted is simply an impossibility." I hold that they can compete with the sighted in certain directions if they are properly trained. I have been a teacher of the Blind for 17 years. I am quite blind myself and I will guarantee to train any child in most branches of elementary education quite

equal to any sighted teacher, and I know that I have taught them better than some sighted people.

Mr. Illingworth has made a very unfair statement about the teachers in day schools. I am at a day school. He told an anecdote of a teacher putting a child in the window to amuse himself by playing with the sunbeams, and thus developing a bad habit of shaking the fingers before the eyes. That teacher was not fit for her position in a Blind school or any other, for she was unable to grasp the requirements of the case, and it was not because she was a teacher in a day school that she did it, but because she was not thoroughly trained. In my school I have an assistant (who is sighted) as zealous as Mr. Illingworth or anyone could be in correcting bad habits. I don't think that statement of his quite fair.

[Mr. Illingworth here explained that he was referring to an ordinary board school teacher].

MR. W. S. SETON-KARR :

I have not only seen football, but cricket played by the Blind. The ball was a good deal larger than an ordinary cricket ball. There was a bell inside, which gave some idea of the direction of the ball. I saw one lad make four or five unsuccessful attempts at a leg hit, and at last he did get hold of the ball. Another lad attempted to catch but did not succeed. The play was a striking instance of the extent to which difficulties may be overcome by expedients and perseverance.

MR. JOSEPH HALL (Swansea Institution).

Might I ask if they will kindly tell us where these games are played ?

(A voice) Worcester.

MR. HALL :

I think it would be very desirable that provision should be made for the recreation of workmen at the close of their day's work. The close confinement for many hours in the workshop affects their health, but if means could be adopted by which they could have open air exercise and recreation daily, it would not only be beneficial to their health, but fit them better for their daily occupation.

The hours of labour in workshops are, I think, excessive, and I venture to suggest a nine hour's day, say from 8 to 5, with an hour for dinner.

I feel that we should do all we can to help our blind and elevate their condition, so that their lives may not be a continual drudgery, but be made as far as possible happy and cheerful.

MR. LITTLEWOOD (Liverpool School) :

Mr. Chairman, as a teacher of children and one who is personally fond of athletics, I think the difficulty this afternoon has not really been touched. Dr. Campbell has given us an

excellent paper, but it was too general. Those who have attempted to provide games and amusements for the children would not be much helped. I think Dr. Campbell's paper is much better for the public. If this Conference is to do any good, it must deal with details rather than broad principles. There was a gentleman in this room this morning, whom I have not seen here this afternoon. I wish he was here, because he is the Head of the Education Department, or the Senior Chief Inspector. I think the weakest point, taking education generally, and of course the Blind as well, has been referred to by Mr. Illingworth. The teachers are not taught to play, and therefore cannot teach others to play. When I was in Sweden (having had the good fortune to be there a few weeks), I found that the teachers were systematically taught to teach the children to amuse themselves. This is not so in England.

The second difficulty is that we cannot buy games ready made for the Blind; at least I have not been able to do so. There are many games which cannot be adapted (of course we know that), but there are many others which can, by means of the necessary ingenuity, time, money and energy.

The third one is—that one of the speakers said his teachers were always willing to help. Now I should like to put it as a teacher. The teacher spends some five or six hours in the schoolroom, and perhaps a little supervision at meals. Where is the teacher's strength to come from to go and spend other hours in the playground? They may be willing and anxious, but their strength will not allow. At Wavertree we have to some extent overcome that. A young man, an athlete, who has sympathy with the Blind, has been appointed to take charge after school hours, and I must say that although the hours appear short he earns his money well. He has quite enough to do without anything else. Those who are anxious to improve the recreation of the children, I should like to bring that to their notice. Do not overtax the teachers, because a willing horse can often be ruined!

One other point is the question of pity in connection with the Blind. What I think is, that a great deal of sentiment comes in where common sense and judgment ought to be used. I don't think the Blind are thankful for expressions of sympathy in words; what they want more are practical suggestions and practical help to take their place. Those who have any connection with the Institutions—I mean close connection—not on the Committee, but on the Staff, well know that blind children, especially when getting to the age of 15 or 16, are no better than ordinary children, I mean morally; and I think it is a serious question which ought to be taken up by those who are interested in the children. The blind naturally, through their blindness,

are not as active as others, and we know what that means. Certain habits are acquired which ought to be eradicated for their own sake, for I fear there are more failures through those habits than through anything else; I believe that is a real weakness, and one reason why the Blind are not more successful. It is not only in the schoolroom and in the home after school hours, but we shall have to go further down, or else it is only trifling with the system. The only way that I can see is by giving the children (especially the growing ones), an opportunity of using their whole energy, and send them to bed thoroughly tired out. I think that ought to be a principle with everyone who is connected with their physical training. The difficulty several speakers have mentioned has been to find suitable games for them. One gentleman asked how you would do with a playground only twice the size of this room. There are many things by which that playground could be made a model outside Gymnasium, where the children could play from morning till night without getting tired. In such a playground I could imagine what football would be like; but with blind children, and especially those who cannot see at all, it is possible to have a tied football, where the ball would just reach the ends without going over. Not one made of willow or cane—I pity the boots of the children who play with such a ball—I have kicked such myself, and do not want to again. An ordinary ball will do, and the small bells which can be found on skipping ropes and little hoops, two or three of those tied on rather loosely give quite sufficient noise for the children to hear; such a ball is quite good and heavy enough. Going through the air the bell of course does not sound, but the blind child is only concerned with it when it reaches the ground, and if the ball is rolling he knows where it is. Watch a blind boy make a dive for a cricket ball that is rolling, it is quite sufficient. Their keenness of hearing will be quite sufficient to enable them to play the game.

Another game which the children are never tired of is the game of stilts—the late Mr. Buckle, I believe, was one who developed this very much—and with stilts of various sizes forms an endless source of amusement. I should like to mention one or two others that could be played. The game of skittles is one that is amusing and interesting. I don't mean a skittle alley, but a level piece with the skittles and the ball. Another one is whip-top, with which the children will play for hours, and they know when the top is down. Another one for such a playground would be the giant-stride. Another one would be a kind of tennis, where, instead of sending the ball over the net they will send it under the net, using a kind of La Crosse bat. It has been played and played successfully. These are some of the games that could be played in such a playground, and many of those

games have come from Worcester College. From what I have heard I know of no other place (not even excepting the Royal Normal College) where outdoor exercises were more systematically carried out than at Worcester College.

DR. CAMPBELL (Norwood College):

I should like to say in regard to all kinds of competitive games, as running, jumping, three-legged races, sack races, stilts, and others, our children join in all of them. In different parts of our premises we have special play-grounds for the older and younger pupils, both boys and girls. Each of these play-grounds is without trees, and is bounded by asphalt walks; this enables the blind pupils to run and play with perfect freedom. I think all blind schools should make much more effort to cultivate a great variety of games and plays, because the children for whom they are working have much less opportunity for active exercise than sighted children. Unless this love of play is cultivated, there is a defect in the child's life which cannot otherwise be overcome. Some gentleman said the teachers would not have time; they have as much fun as the pupils, and the exercise keeps them healthy and vigorous. We teach all our children dancing, deportment, and so forth. When I engage a teacher I ask at once, "Do you know how to play with children?" One lady applied not long ago. I said, "Can you give a children's party?" "I never tried, sir; I don't know." I brought 25 children, and left them with her. She said, "I don't know what to say, nor what to do." I decided she was not a suitable person for the vacant position.

PROVISION FOR DEFECTIVE BLIND CHILDREN.

By C. S. LOCH, Esq.,

Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society.

"Provision for Defective Blind Children. The two adjectives in this sentence we have to define. By defective children we mean children not being imbecile and not being merely dull or backward . . . children who by reason of mental or physical defects are incapable of receiving proper benefit from the instruction in the ordinary public elementary schools, but are not incapable by reason of such defect of receiving benefit in special classes or schools." Elementary Education Defective (children) Act, 1899, 62 & 63, Vict. c. 32. By Blind, we mean "too blind to read the ordinary school books used by children." Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf children) Act, 1893, 56 and 57, Vic. c. 42,

Both as defective and as blind these children are eligible for admission to special classes or schools provided by the school authority. But unfortunately in spite of this the provision for them, whether from public or from charitable funds, is very insufficient.

Their maintenance and education have also to be considered in relation to their after life—the period after 16 when their official schooling ends, and in that respect also there is great want of means and organisation.

Further, as defective, they represent part—very small it is true—of a problem of which a good working solution is greatly needed.

I propose to state as far as I can the approximate number of these children: to refer to one or two cases in order to indicate the questions of difficulty which in some way we have to answer in regard to them; to suggest, with the assistance of others, the line of educational method and of subsequent treatment that might be adopted; and lastly to propose some revision of our public arrangements for the help and supervision of these and other similar cases.

NUMBER.

The Royal Commission of 1886 reported that approximately the number of blind children between the ages of 5 and 15 were probably 1,710. Mr. B. P. Jones, the superintendent and organiser of Blind and Deaf Schools for the School Board for London, tells me that of 223 blind children on the roll, 20 (11 boys and 9 girls) are defective, (apart from 4 others who are defective in the sense that they are deaf as well as blind.) This is nearly 9 per cent. a larger proportion than I anticipated. Since 1886, the school time of the blind and defective has been raised to 16. The estimate of the Royal Commission which they themselves considered below the mark, must now, therefore, with the added year of school time be still more insufficient. And possibly now the number of defective, out of the population of blind children (which may perhaps be estimated at 1,800) is about 160.

CASES.

Now I will mention two cases.

The first is this. In 1892 we came across a family consisting of man and wife and ten children. The eldest child a girl was 19 and stated to be blind and lame and unable to dress herself. Of the remaining children, two girls (10 and 8) and a boy (5) were Blind and had never walked. They went to a School Board School for the Blind three times a week in a large perambulator. The father was out of work. He was advised to apply to the guardians, especially with a view to the girl of 19 being sent to a home. But he got work and did not apply. The children remained at school, but the boy gave so much

trouble by his habits that he had to be excluded. Afterwards the family moved beyond the London School Board area.

Five years later, things were much in the same state—or rather, with the absence of schooling, they had grown worse. The eldest girl was still at home. An elder sister looked after the three blind children, now too big to go to school in a perambulator. They were, it was said, very dirty and altogether in a very deplorable state. The wife had recently died, partly the victim of drink. The man's record was bad. (I mention these points merely to show that what, under tolerable home conditions might have been possible, was in this instance out of the question). And in accordance with a plan then in force, the children were seen by a competent medical adviser—in this instance, Dr. Francis Warner, at the office of the District Committee of our Society. I need mention only one or two points in his report.

“A; girl; 12 years; perfectly imbecile; has had scarcely any training; no opportunity of playing; is quite blind. Harmless, helpless, incapable of self-support in future. General health very low. Needs warm clothing and feeding. Probably under social circumstances is fitted for “Crippled Home.”

B; girl; 10 years. Feebly gifted mentally; blind; paralysed as to legs; probably improvable by education. Is brighter mentally and in better condition than sister.

C; boy; eight years. Backward mentally, but appears educable; blind; crippled; very thin; needs feeding and clothing.”

The eldest girl (25) now seemed the dullest and most inert of the party.

Here, it will be noted, are four children; one, the eldest, for whom nothing was done, for the father would not apply to the Guardians who could alone have dealt with her: and three other children; one an imbecile and suitable for admission to an asylum; and two defective and educable to a certain degree either in a special class aided by a good home, or in a special home.

They were still under school age for blind and defective children; but the only place for educating them, for they could not leave their home, seemed to be through the help of the Home Teaching Society; and needless to say, without any disparagement of that Society, the attempt failed. Subsequently, towards the end of 1901, about three years later, but while the children were still under school age, the man applied for their admission to the workhouse. This was granted; and so the case concludes.

Before drawing any inferences, I will refer to a case which Mr. Stainsby, of the General Institution of the Blind at

Birmingham, has mentioned to me as an instance of the evil effects of bad home training. The child was sent to him by a School Board. It was so helpless that, although nearly six years old, it could not walk unassisted, while its mind was evidently deficient. The history of the case showed that the mother never attempted to train the child, but allowed it to spend most of its time in bed, or when taken out it invariably rode in a perambulator. The Institution at Birmingham could not then arrange to receive it, and it was sent to another school, where it was given over to the charge of one person; and now "the child has so far improved that it is able to walk."

I insert in a note at the end of this paper, one or two instances of defective blind children at a blind centre. They support my conclusions. I have obtained them through the kindness of Mr. B. P. Jones.

EDUCATIONAL METHOD.

The Departmental Committee of 1898 reported (§ 79):

"It is necessary that exact regulations shall be laid down in dealing with such cases.

We recommend that the medical officer shall decide in respect of any feeble-minded child, whether it is blind . . . within the meaning of the Act. Feeble-minded children who are blind . . . should not be taught in special classes of feeble-minded children who can see . . . They should be classified as Blind and provided for under the Blind and Deaf Children Act. It is desirable that separate provision should be made in a Blind . . . School or Institution for dealing with such children . . . Such an Institution might open a special branch for their reception and make special provision for their education."

Beside this, we may place a sentence from the last General Report of Mr. T. King, H.M. Senior Chief Inspector, on the Certified Schools for Blind and Deaf Scholars to August 1898.

"No special provision for feeble-minded blind children has yet been made; but the number of such children has not proved sufficient to require it:" and in 1900 he wrote, "No good Institution refuses to take a blind child who is described as exceptionally dull or stupid, or almost imbecile. Such children are received and treated with the greatest kindness and patience. Often, experience shows that the apparent imbecility was due to the want of proper training, and it is only after long trial that a child is returned as incapable of instruction in an ordinary Institution."

This sentence it seems to me puts the case too favourably. Many Institutions for the Blind refuse defective cases. They require that the candidates should not be "deficient in intellect or physical power," or should be "healthy and capable of receiving instruction."

If we take the actual procedure at the present time, the child attends a Blind or a "Special" school at or before 5 years of age. If the latter, it is probably soon transferred to the Blind School, for, obviously, as its chief organ of intelligence, the sense of sight, is lacking, it is better treated as a blind child who is defective, than as a defective child who is blind. At the Blind School it will require special instruction with one or two others, possibly who are similarly affected; and all is done that is possible to improve the mind by manual work and in other ways. But it is clear that in the cases I have quoted much more than this was necessary. The child had to be taught to use its limbs.

In these and other cases of defectives, if special classes or arrangements keep children at a day school who should be passed on to special Institutions and possibly be kept permanently, they may be a hindrance rather than a help in their treatment.

Whether the child should remain in the blind class or blind special class, or not, should be determined early. If the child has to leave, so far as I can judge, there is often no home to receive him, and at least there are difficulties in his removal—though under the Act of 1893 the required provision, combined with the cost of maintenance, can be furnished at the expense of the school authority.

The number to be provided for is not large, probably with all deductions not more than 100. Could not County and Borough Authorities combine (if the present Education Bill be passed) to establish it. This would meet the difficulty till the age of 16. And possibly the time has come for the more "exact regulations," suggested by the Departmental Committee.

SUBSEQUENT TREATMENT.

At 16 the children are discharged, some to parents who, so long as they live, may be trusted to look after them carefully; or, not infrequently, to parents incapable of looking after them, and entirely careless of their good, and by their absence grown accustomed to be free of the obligation to tend them; or to the workhouse.

If the defective blind child at the age of 16 is admitted to any Blind Institution for life, and money is wanted for his maintenance, application is made to the Guardians, and if there is a home available for him, the Guardians may pay for him in an Institution with the consent of the Local Government Board. Otherwise he will remain in the workhouse. If again, the defectiveness has grown into imbecility, application may be made to the Guardians, but the child (if any Institution can be found for him) passes into one which is provided by the County or County Borough Authorities, or in London at present by the Metropolitan Asylums Board, and comes under the supervision

of the Lunacy Commissioners. In either event some arrangement after 16 has to be made, and in both cases there is great lack of accommodation.

ORGANISATION OF ASSISTANCE AFTER 16.

The number of blind defectives is comparatively small, but the administrative problem in regard to them is similar to that in other defective cases; and the present position is quite anomalous.

If special educational provision has to be made for defectives before 16, it seems but right that, since many of them require some permanent provision, this, too, should be provided for them afterwards. They are dependent because they are afflicted. Does it not follow that, if the Poor Law is to be responsible for them as "poor" or "pauper," it should have to make the necessary provision for them, directly or indirectly; or that, if they are to be considered primarily as defective, whether they should come under any of the Acts administered by the Lunacy Commissioners or not, they should be provided for by County Councils and Borough Councils; or at least by some body other than the Poor Law. Possibly for this and much else we should have a Charities Department.

But the discussion of this question would lead me from my subject. I would urge, here, that definite provision should be made for defective blind children at special homes, possibly in connection with existing Institutions for the Blind, and chiefly at a very early and probationary stage in their educational course, in special classes at a Blind Centre. To promote this, we want now, I think, a re-consideration of the problem of the needs of the children up to 16 and after 16, and, as the Departmental Committee said, more "exact regulations."

PARTICULARS OF DEFECTIVE BLIND AT . . . SCHOOL.

A. B. (14) This girl attended a special school for about a year, and she has been at —— about six years. She is a tall girl, but speaks like a child of four or five years of age. She only knows her letters from a tin alphabet sheet, but cannot tell them from a book. She also knows her figures, and sometimes writes twice table correctly, she occasionally writes a few Braille letters, but she cannot put the paper in her frame or do anything with her hands. She threads beads, but where number is concerned she fails utterly. She has a most careful, pains-taking mother, but for all this she cannot dress herself. The father is a cabinet-maker, and believed to have a brother with some brain trouble. This girl will never be able to take care of herself. She is a nice girl, and the worst case in school.

C. D. (14). This boy formerly had his sight, and at that time attended a special school. He is now perfectly blind. He

speaks very indistinctly, but if allowed would constantly be talking, and with very little connection in anything he says. He has been at school four years. He does easy sums, reads and writes from Standard I. Reader. He enjoys working with his hands in making bags or knotted watch guards. He is somewhat dirty in his habits, and needs constantly reminding of biting his finger nails and such things. He shows a very kindly disposition when anything is given him, and always wishes to share with others. He eats tremendously. He is boarded out, but when he is returned to his home he will likely have a sad life. His parents visit him occasionally.

E. F. This boy was not always blind. He is only able to work in Standard I, and then very imperfectly. In general knowledge he is fairly intelligent, but seems to have great difficulty in using his hands. His limbs are rigid, and he does not know his way about the School. He is a good well-behaved boy, and comes from a respectable home. He has no mother, and his father is a printer by trade. This boy will scarcely ever be fit to take his place in life with others who are brighter.

These children are frightfully nervous in moving about. They have no bad tendencies. C. D. is the only one who has ever proved dishonest or untruthful. They seem to love their school and are never absent except on account of illness.

DR. CAMPBELL :

I have only a moment, as I have to go, but I have for many years considered this question of defective children. I do not think the ordinary blind school ought to have them. You cannot treat them as other children, they want special teaching; you must give them health and strength by playing; in other words, I would apply a more simple Kindergarten System to them than to ordinary children. My recommendation has been for the last ten or fifteen years that all school authorities for the whole country should unite and build a school for defective blind children. I believe that is the way to get at those children, and if I were twenty years younger I should like to be the one appointed to manage that school.

THE CHAIRMAN :

If any lady or gentleman wishes to speak on this paper, perhaps they will kindly send their cards up.

MR. MUNBY (York School) :

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, as the representative of the Yorkshire School of the Blind, I should like to say that I should not feel it right that our children who are required to be healthy both in mind and body should be mixed with those who are defective. We have attempted it in a small way in Mr. Buckle's time with regard to one or two poor children who were deaf as

well as blind, but we found it too much of a burden, and of course distinctly a hindrance, and although I sincerely wish well for such children I am decidedly of opinion, after an experience of more than twenty-five years, that they should be separately provided for. I am reminded by my friend Captain Hobbs, of Manchester, that at the Conference at York, in 1883, a paper was read on this subject, and that separation was then distinctly advised. I believe this advice has been followed on subsequent occasions. I should be glad if it could be arranged on some definite plan, although I can well understand that those in authority have their hands quite full in providing for the different classes of children; but as our aim is to return the young blind to their homes, or to send them out into the world healthy in body as well as in mind, it could not be right that either we or our pupils should be handicapped by the presence of any who are otherwise bodily or mentally subject to any other defect, which, requiring separate attention, must detract from the attention we need to concentrate on the one defect of blindness.

REV. J. A. BEAUMONT :

I only want to say a very few words, Mr. Chairman. I was for some time Chaplain of the Institution in the Upper Avenue Road, Swiss Cottage. There we had a few children, boys and girls, who were very near the borderland of mental deficiency. The contrast between those children and the extraordinary brightness and alertness of the majority of boys and girls with whom one came into contact was exceedingly marked, and I must say that my own experience leads me to believe that Mr. Loch is entirely right in saying that some fresh machinery should be set up for dealing with these particular children. I know we all tried very hard in every way to bring these children along, and up to the level of the others, but the poor things were really a hindrance to the regular ordering of the school work in every way. Special time had to be made for them, and special classes held for them, and I am afraid very little progress was made with them, simply on account of the fact that the regular work of the school had to go on in other departments, and they were really hindering it. I am convinced that the only way to deal with this particular problem is to set up some special machinery which shall be directed to that particular end and to that end only.

CAPTAIN HOBBS (Henshaw's Asylum) :

Mr. Chairman, I merely wish to follow up what Mr. Munby said with reference to the Conference, which I had the honour of attending at York. It was followed afterwards, in 1894, by a Conference at Birmingham, and at that Conference it was also unanimously agreed that some such provision should be made for these imbecile blind children. We have had experience of two

or three such cases, and were obliged very reluctantly to get rid of them. I visited the homes of some of these children after they had left, to ascertain how they were going on, and I found that the unclean habits some of them had acquired had not been checked. I think that the entire Conference in Birmingham was in favour of some such an Institution as Mr. Munby has spoken of, and Mr. Loch has mentioned in his paper, being provided, where such children might be treated, because it is not fair to other children to have them associated with these imbeciles, besides being a very great tax on the teachers.

MR. LOCH :

I think, Mr. Chairman, that though this question appears to be simple, it is rather difficult to deal with it practically. In the case I have mentioned, the practical difficulty remained unsolved for about 10 years. If we write to Mr. Wilson, or consult anybody else about these cases, we receive the simple answer that there is no remedy. I should like to ask this Conference to pass some resolution on the subject, or make some strong representation in regard to it. It is possible that we may now get something done. If this Conference cannot pass any resolution, some of the Institutions, or the Gardner's Trust, will I hope confer with the Education Authorities, so that we may reach some practical result.

A lady asks, what is to be done with blind epileptic children : are they to have no education ? The answer is that it is right that they should, but that there is no way of dealing with them. A better system has to be instituted from top to bottom. We have now no provision for these cases of double defectiveness. For defective children also and for the epileptic and imbecile, the provision is quite insufficient. The afflicted classes indeed are those that society least considers. At the present time the Institutions for them are beggarly as compared with their great need. The whole treatment of afflicted children should be placed on a new basis, and dealt with from a new point of view. If this is not done, I despair of any real progress being made. We have now reached the point of educating the children to a certain extent ; but after sixteen years of age we make no provision for them, though we know that they can never maintain themselves, and often thus we lose the good results of the education.

MR. HALL :

I think these doubly afflicted children should only be treated with the imbeciles. They certainly should not be in close association with the others. This is often the case in this country. In Hamburg they are much more sensibly treated.

MR. LOCH :

I only referred to imbeciles, I did not include them in my paper. I think we can all agree in regard to them.

THE CHAIRMAN :

If any lady or gentleman wishes to speak upon Mr. Sharpe's paper, will they please send up their cards ?

MR. PINE (Nottingham Institution) :

Mr. Chairman, I feel that this subject of Mr. Sharpe's paper (as to what should be done for those who arrive at the age of 16, and for those who are blind afterwards) is an extremely important one for this Conference, especially so is it to us at Nottingham, who have been unfortunate enough to have to give up the education of the young blind, though perhaps we have acted not unwisely in the opinion of some. I have come to this Conference with a very earnest desire to hear any opinions that may be expressed as to what are the best steps to be taken for those blind children who have arrived at the age of 16, and for those who have become blind after that age.

With regard to the question of Guardians, I fully agree with a good deal that was said this morning with respect to the willingness of Boards of Guardians to pay for children after the age of 16, but I do think that the position of affairs at the present time is almost as unsatisfactory as it is in relation to the general education of the country. Educationalists, I believe, regard the position of the education of the sighted generally as being in a state of chaos at the present time, and for that reason we have an important Education Bill now before Parliament. I do not think that the present legislative arrangements for the education of the Blind are at all satisfactory, because, if you remember, before the Act of 1893 was passed we had a clear field, and there was no restriction as to age. At that time the children were sent to Institutions in two ways—first of all by private philanthropy (or, of course, the parents themselves sometimes paid the fees), and secondly, by Boards of Guardians, but at that time there was no limit if the Boards of Guardians were willing to pay, as to how long they should continue to do so. I remember well at the Conference in 1890, at Norwood, during a discussion on the proposed Bill, which had just been issued, I stated that I felt a great deal of misgiving as to what might happen when pupils arrived at the age of 16 if the Boards of Guardians' powers, unlimited as they were as to time, were repealed, and the School Boards were to step in as the authority, and their responsibility was to entirely cease at that age. And we have found—I think all Institution managers must have found—that there is a very great difficulty when children arrive at 16, for it is obvious that they cannot then be in a position to earn their living, as the technical training has only just begun. It seems to me that is not at all a satisfactory state of things for a School Board to give notices such as I have had given me at times, that at a certain date they will no longer be responsible

for the education of the boy or girl who is in the Institution. The children are then left high and dry on our hands, probably in the middle of the term, and perhaps for some time there may be no one paying at all, and it remains for us to find out who the Board of Guardians may be, and beg them to take up the case as it stood in the hands of the School Board and carry it on. I do hope, therefore, that before long the present unsatisfactory system may be revised, and some authority, whether it be the Town or County Councils, or otherwise, may step in and take over from the School Board the education of the Blind after the age of 16. For my part, I cannot say that I like the Boards of Guardians as the authority at all; for though they are, as a rule, willing to pay (I have met with very little difficulty when they have thoroughly realised the situation), yet it seems to me that the Board of Guardians is not quite the authority to whom we should have to look for the training of our children. By the Act of 1893, except in the case of pauper children, we were disassociated from the Boards of Guardians, but we have now to go back to them after 16. I do think that we ought to lift this question of the training of the Blind out of the hands of the Boards of Guardians altogether. We don't appeal to them for the sighted, why should we for the Blind? Let us have equal treatment for the Blind as for the sighted. Whether it be the County Councils, or whoever the authority may be, I trust that there will be some recognised authority which will be responsible for the education and training of the Blind other than the Board of Guardians. Apart from that, as we Institution managers have to take the initiative ourselves, we always feel an uncertainty as to how long the Boards of Guardians will continue to pay. Sometimes they will write and say, "We will pay for the case for twelve months." There is no certainty about it, and therefore I should like to see, as I said just now, some authority, such as the County Council (and I can think of no better authority), which should be charged with the continuance of the technical training after the School Boards have completed all they are able to do in the way of education.

Mr. Sharpe in his paper this morning said something about the employment of women. I think that is one of the most difficult questions we have to deal with. I am sure from a long experience of our work in Nottingham it has grieved me more than anything else. While we have trades for the men and boys, although of course they are limited, and we have come here to try and find out what other occupations we can usefully resort to, yet we all know that whatever we can do for the male Blind the opportunities are much less for the female Blind, and I do wish it were possible to find out new ways and new chances for the employment of blind women. I think we all feel a very great difficulty in that respect. Miss Heywood this morning asked a

question with regard to the older blind and stated the difficulty she experienced in regard to them at Manchester. I think she said their method was to put them with an ordinary brush maker and allow them 8/- per week, and after about six weeks they could employ them at 12/- per week. I could not help thinking that if they could do as well as that, Miss Heywood had solved the problem herself, for I do not think there are many Institutions where they could earn so much money in so short a time, though I question whether they would have received sufficient all-round training. I have usually found Boards of Guardians willing to make a sufficient allowance in such cases during the time necessary to give a proper and adequate training, and I think it is far better to do this than for such older blind to be imperfectly taught.

Dr. Campbell also referred in his paper this afternoon to blind people being put into sighted shops, and by some division of labour they should be able to do some part of the work, and sighted men to finish. I do not know what is the experience of other blind Institution managers, but my experience is that sighted shops are entirely closed to the Blind. I know of no instance where ordinary manufacturers who run their business merely as a business, on business principles, are willing to employ blind persons; if there are such shops, I should be glad to hear of them. So that after all I think we shall have to employ our blind persons as a rule in our Institution workshops.

In conclusion may I earnestly repeat that instead of the present uncertain and unsatisfactory condition of the education and training of the Blind, there may be some co-ordination, and that the training may go right on, instead of stopping at the age of 16 as it does at present. Although the Guardians have been willing as a rule to undertake what has been done after that time, I think some other authority should be charged with it, and that the Guardians should not have to be applied to by us.

MAJOR-GENERAL CHADS, C.B. (Southsea School):

Mr. Chairman, I can fully endorse what Dr. Campbell said with regard to Guardians. During the last 12 years I have had occasion to apply to them many times, and I know of no occasion where the Guardians have refused to take over the education of children when they have arrived at the age of 16, but we do have trouble with the parents. If something could be done to pass the children over to the Guardians when reaching that age, it would be a very great benefit. Parents seem to think that there is no more to be done after the age of 16. We find it very difficult to make them understand that the training is very important indeed, and that the children ought to remain for two or three years more. Then there is the money question which is a difficulty. In the school that I am connected with, we are bound to raise annually one-third of our expenses by private

subscriptions. Whatever our expenses may be, we are bound to raise one-third, or the Education Department can withdraw our license. We are licensed for 72 pupils, but our license will be withdrawn if we do not raise one-third of our expenses by private subscriptions or donations. In many instances I know it is not difficult, but with some it is. The last two years we feared it might fail us. It did not however, a legacy came in and put us straight. The Gardner's Trust have been very generous. The Clothworkers' Company have also come to our assistance, but there is a constant source of anxiety whether we may get the money at the end of the year—*i.e.*: the third we are bound to get.

With regard to the Board of Guardians, I find that it is necessary before a child attains the age of 16 to apply to the School authority to find out from what Union the child comes. This we know nothing about, and have to take up time in correspondence. Then we have to make application to them a month or two beforehand. They ask a great many questions, but when they are satisfied that the children are taken care of, and that they have a right to pay the money, I never have any trouble. The only trouble I ever had was with a School Board, who, after paying for the child for four months, declared that they had never heard of the child, and refused to continue paying for it.

MR. BURNE (Henshaw's Asylum):

Mr. Chairman, I thought I would take the opportunity of emphasising what has been said with regard to the difficulty in obtaining payment for children on attaining the age of 16. We in Manchester have also had that difficulty, and it is one which is always attended with very great pain and very great anxiety on our part. We sometimes have to send a child home, to surroundings which are probably not desirable, or we have to face the difficulty of maintaining the child at school without the proper authority being responsible for it. The crux of the whole difficulty is this—School Boards introduce children into our schools and pay for them until the age of 16. If we ask the Board of Guardians to pay for a child we have to consult the parents, and the parents often object very strongly to being thus pauperised, so the education of the child, to say the least of it, is in danger of being lost just at an age when it should be the basis of intelligent application to technical work to fit it for some employment in after-life.

REV. ST. CLARE HILL (St. George's School):

Mr. Chairman, I have only one word to say. I should like to endorse what Mr. Burne has just said, that although the Act of Parliament will allow money to be paid by the Guardians, it

is a very important question whether the parents consider that their child is by that means being pauperised. That being the case, it seems to me that it is most necessary, if at all possible, to put the authority in the hands of a body to which is attached no such stigma. I thought perhaps if I expressed what I feel myself might meet the case, it would be of some use, and the members of this Conference might join with me and give a sort of united front to those who are looking for an expression of opinion. How would it be, I say, if the Education Department would give us a grant up to the age of 18, so as to continue their education? Then from the age of 18 let the County Council deal with the case, and let that Council be empowered to give a grant which would secure a short apprenticeship for say five years, for those who have not had a three years' training before the age of 18. It sounds a little complicated, but it means this, that all the Blind would get an opportunity of at least three years' apprenticeship, and very likely five years. If we could express ourselves, Mr. Chairman, in some way like that, I think it would be very helpful for those who are endeavouring to do their best to meet the requirements of the case.

MR. STAINSBY (Birmingham Institution):

Mr. Chairman, I must apologise for again coming forward, but this morning I omitted to mention one or two points in connection with this important matter of continuing the education of the Blind after the age of 16. As I then said, we have a great number of children constantly coming of age, and so far I am pleased to say we have never sent away one child of any capacity after attaining the age of 16 until their education was completed, but I think it is due to a certain authority (or a certain Trust) to say that through their assistance a great deal has been done which could not otherwise have been accomplished. I mean the Gardner Trust for the Blind. I believe I am right in saying that last year the Gardner Trust spent £5,000 in assisting people after they had attained the age of 16. Had it not been for this Trust the whole thing, so far as we are concerned, must have collapsed. When all other sources of help fail, we fly to Mr. Wilson and his Committee, and they always most kindly come forward and stop the gap. I think it is due to this Conference to recognise the help which we have always received.

One point I ought to mention, about which I gave a wrong impression this morning. It is in regard to keeping in touch with the Blind all their lives. I think I said we ought to keep them in the Institution; it was not my intention to say that; I intended to have said we ought to keep in touch with them from the cradle to the grave.

MR. TAYLOR (Liverpool School):

Mr. Chairman, I quite agree with several of the preceding speakers, respecting what they said about Guardians of the Poor, although I may say that only in about two instances have I had any trouble; but in those two instances I have had to appeal to the Committee of the Gardner's Trust, who I am pleased to say, as in the case of Mr. Stainsby, have always been most willing to render assistance. At the same time I do think that after the School Board or Education Department have taken upon themselves to pay the expense of the education of these children out of the taxes, up to 16 years of age, that the State ought in some way or other to continue it up to the age of 21, because it is impossible, as one speaker was saying just now, to teach some of the Blind a trade by the time they attain 18 years of age, and even if they were taught I scarcely think it would be right to turn them out into the world at that age. Some sighted people themselves have a great difficulty to get a living, and the difficulties are far greater, as you are all aware, with the Blind. The question respecting the Guardians is another matter. I have had more difficulty with parents in getting them to make application to the Guardians, because the Guardians will not as a rule pay attention to my own application unless the parents themselves apply. And you must understand that blind people have a certain amount of pride, and we ought to encourage that, and not send a child when it is 16 years of age to the Guardians of the Poor for assistance, and thus have a stigma upon it, for they are then classed as paupers, and this certainly ought not to be. I do hope that some measures will be taken, and some pressure brought to bear upon the various Members of Parliament, to move in the matter, and get an Act of Parliament passed extending the age for helping the Blind to 21 years instead of 16.

As to life in Institutions, as probably some of you are aware, I have pupils from 16 upwards. There is of course great difficulty with some of them. There are a few both blind and deaf. We have with the latter the greatest sympathy; we do all we possibly can to brighten their lives, but it is almost impossible to amuse them, or for them to associate with those around them, although the Blind who can hear are certainly most kind to them. I do think it would be a great pleasure and also a great assistance if some means were forthcoming, or some Institution was formed, for such people, because almost from the outset they require individual teaching.

Then as regards occupations for blind women, it is certainly a great trouble, and I may say a great grief to me that I cannot devise some other means than I have at my disposal. I have come here with the hope that some means may be brought

forward of finding some other employment for them. As regards ourselves, when pupils or candidates are admitted to us we have a most experienced oculist in connection with our Institution, and every facility is given to that oculist to enable him to restore their sight. The eminent oculist we have (George E. Walker, Esq., of Liverpool), has done wonders in that way. We have had people come to us, and they have gone away as sighted persons. One girl came to us quite blind; one eye had eventually to be removed, and a glass eye of course was given to her, her sight was restored to the other eye, and now she is earning a living as a housemaid, and I am pleased to say doing well. Then we have another whose sight was improved; we are now training her in the Institution as a housemaid and waitress. She also is going on very favourably at the present time; she is now with one of our doctors, whose housemaid is ill, and she is doing duty in her place. Another young woman (I do not know whether you approve of it), we are endeavouring to teach the pianoforte tuning; she is getting on fairly well. I am bringing these little matters forward, for there is no reason why many things should not be done as well by blind people with proper training as by those with sight.

As regards amusements, we ought to give the Blind as much pleasure as possible. I think in all Institutions arrangements should be made, if possible, to have recreation rooms—rooms I mean where they can have various kinds of games, to make them feel that it is their own recreation room, and that they can do almost anything they like—play draughts or chess—not gambling of course. I quite agree with Doctor Campbell respecting dancing; some persons may object to it, but I think it is excellent exercise and recreation; I know in our own school we have an occasional dance, and the pupils enjoy it thoroughly.

The Chairman reminds me that I am going into another paper, but I am so interested that I hope you will excuse me. I hope other speakers will endeavour to help us by an expression of opinion as regards recreation of the Blind in schools and workshops, as it would be very interesting to have some new ideas.

REV. J. KNOWLES (British and Foreign Bible Society):

I am only moved by the general desire to find further occupations for blind women, to say that I saw some pillow lace made in Naples by women, and samples of it may be got from the Blind Institution in Naples.

MISS PETTY (London School Board):

Mr. Chairman, I thought you might like to know how the education of the Blind is arranged in Germany. In that country the State provides not only for the elementary education of the Blind, but also for their technical training. While the Blind are

in school the parents pay for their maintenance, and if they are unable to, the parish authorities pay. But there are always some free places. Up to the age of 14, they receive an ordinary education such as we have in our elementary schools, and after that they go into the workshops. There is no limit of age, but they generally leave at 18 (in some cases they stop until 21 or 22). The rule is that they leave when the head of the school certifies them as being fit.

After that, the Charitable Associations take them in hand. All the money subscribed by charity goes to help the Blind to earn a living, or to provide pensions for those who are not fit for work. The Associations in many cases sell the material for work to the Blind at wholesale prices, and when it has been made up at home, they buy it back from them at its market value. In this way the Blind are able to compete with the sighted.

THE CHAIRMAN :

We are all very much indebted to the readers of the papers and to those who have taken part in the discussions, and you will agree with me that there is sure to be considerable benefit derived from what has taken place to-day. The whole question is one which I fear has after all to be settled by three letters of the alphabet, £ s. d. We can talk about the duties of the Boards of Guardians, and the London County Council, and the School Board, &c., but it all amounts, sooner or later, to £ s. d., and as everyone thinks he is already more taxed than he ought to be, he objects to further impositions, and so falls back on the Gardner's Trust, which seems to help everybody.

I do not think that any of us can be sufficiently grateful to that Society, to its Chairman, to its indefatigable Secretary, and indeed to all connected with it, for the enormous work they do for the Blind. I hope in saying these few words I shall carry you all with me in thanking them very much for the way in which they have started this Conference, which, I feel convinced, will prove to be a source of immense benefit to those in whose interests it has been organised.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23rd.

The chair was taken at 10 a.m. by W. S. SETON-KARR, Esq., who said :—

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, those who were here yesterday had the advantage of hearing some excellent papers on the Higher Education of the Blind and also on Physical Training— a most important subject in their education. Those who were absent

will have the opportunity of reading the papers when the whole Report is printed. But it must be obvious to you that there are many blind persons who are not fitted for education in its highest form. A large proportion of the Blind are only suited for trades and technical arts, and on these, to them, important subjects you will hear papers read by experts. I shall at once call on Mr. Stainsby to read his paper; as you know, he is the General Superintendent and Secretary of the Edgbaston Institution.

I have been informed by a lady that Mr. W. H. Murray, who has had great experience in China, has offered to speak, and I think he will be able to give some interesting information.

PROFESSIONS AND TRADES BEST ADAPTED FOR THE BLIND,

Including those not usually practised,
and the best means of helping the Blind to carry on
the trades for which they have been trained.

By HENRY STAINSBY, ESQ.,

General Superintendent and Secretary of the General Institution for
the Blind, Birmingham.

It will be agreed by all that the subject of this paper is of the utmost importance. It will not be possible to adequately deal with it in the brief time allotted to me, but I will endeavour to put in a concise form the information and statistics I have been able to collect. In order that the paper should be a fair statement of the opinions and experiences of experts, I put a series of questions dealing with this subject to more than a hundred well-known and esteemed authorities in all parts of the world, and the replies I have received, and for which I now make my grateful acknowledgment, have been most useful to me.

Now the Blind, because of the loss of the most important sense possessed by human beings (that of reason alone excepted), are limited to comparatively few occupations, for the simple reason that sight is constantly called into requisition in almost every pursuit of life. The professions and trades, therefore, that the Blind practise should be those where sight is least required.

From the replies to the questions already referred to, it is clear that, whilst there are and always will be exceptionally clever blind persons who excel in difficult and extraordinary pursuits, there are those—and they form the vast majority—who are of only ordinary capacity, and it is to this large class that our efforts must chiefly be directed, although we must neglect neither the very smart nor the extremely dull.

My returns show that handicrafts do and must play the most important part, whilst certain professions occupy no insignificant position. An analysis of the returns shows the twelve most suitable occupations, in order of merit, to be as follows:—(1) Basket Making; (2) Brush and Broom Making; (3) Pianoforte Tuning; (4) Mat Making; (5) Chair Seating; (6) Music; (7) Mattress, Bedding, and allied trades; (8) Knitting, Netting, &c.; (9) Typewriting; (10) Legal and Clerical; (11 and 12) Ships' Fender Manufacture and Tea Agencies. Among some which follow these, but hold minor places, are newsvending, travelling, bass dre-sing, willow peeling, Canadian chair fitting, weaving, home teaching, hawking, firewood chopping and bundling, fire-lighter making, rope making, massage, printing, teaching (scholastic), bamboo furniture manufacturing, shoe making, and joinery. I will endeavour to deal with the most important of these in as brief a manner as possible.

(1) **Basket Making.** This is the most popular trade for the Blind, and has been so for many years, although it is certainly a very difficult one to acquire, not only on account of the unlimited variety of shapes and sizes, but also because of the numerous methods of weaving the whales, fitches, borders, slews, &c. It may be argued "Why not confine certain workers to particular classes of baskets?" While this is most desirable, it is often impracticable, so that in the end the good general workman is the one who fares the best. The basket industry possesses advantages which stamp it as a permanent trade for the Blind—(1) Because it is not appreciably affected by the ever varying fashions of the day; (2) It is not likely that it will ever fall into disuse, as it has retained its popularity from the earliest times; (3) Wicker-work can never be made by machinery; (4) The lighter kinds of baskets can be made by blind women and girls. This last is a strong point in its favour, for it is a well-known fact that the vocations of blind women are far more limited than those of blind men. It may be interesting to you to know that one of our pupils (a Gardner scholar), who only completed her training as a basket maker at Christmas last, has since earned an average wage of 7/11 per week, which will probably materially increase as her experience extends.

As showing the development possible in this department of trade, I may mention that in the Birmingham Institution our journeymen have increased from 2 in 1897 to 16 in 1902, and the sale of baskets from £947 to £1,456 in the same period. I should explain that the former sum includes the sale of a large quantity of foreign made baskets, but not so the latter.

Unremunerative and unsuitable work should be discouraged as far as possible; on the other hand, let managers and instructors unite in introducing articles of wicker-work specially

sued to the blind and in demand by the public ; and having done so, protect these by our patent laws to prevent competition.

(2) **Brush Making** provides very suitable work for the Blind, and inasmuch as the workers can be confined to certain branches, and the labour in these branches can be easily divided, it follows that a knowledge of the trade is more quickly acquired than in the Basket Department, while the workers also earn good wages. Like mat making, it possesses the advantage of being easily acquired by the adult blind—a large class with which every Institution has to deal. It has, however, several serious drawbacks, for unfortunately it is a very complicated trade, and requires the closest attention in management. A large amount of capital is also necessary to carry it on, while the introduction of machinery is making hand labour more and more scarce. However, this trade is an excellent one for both men and women, and generally forms the leading industry in the Institution workshops where it is carried on.

(3) **Pianoforte Tuning** is unquestionably an excellent profession for those blind persons who possess the necessary qualification of a correct ear. Little difficulty is experienced in training the Blind to tune correctly. The chief and almost insurmountable obstacle to success (unless, as in some case, the blind tuners are employed in pianoforte factories or show rooms) is the inability of many blind tuners to properly repair or replace any part of an instrument that may become worn or broken. Occasionally we have highly mechanical youths, who can mend clocks, make motor cars, tune and repair church organs, or make beautiful pieces of cabinet work or delicate electrical appliances. To such the repairing of instruments presents no difficulty ; but we have to deal with majorities rather than with exceptions. It is absurd to teach tuning without repairing, and as the latter is the more difficult, special attention should be given to it. Having acquired the use of carpenters' tools in the technical shop from early childhood, our blind lads take more readily to the delicate work which piano repairing involves. It is a good practice for Institutions to undertake the renovation of old pianos, which should be carried out by the blind apprentices under the care of a fully qualified sighted man ; and where practicable it is also most desirable that arrangements should be made with pianoforte manufacturers or dealers to receive blind pupils and allow them to tune the instruments in their show rooms, and also to take a share in repairing the instruments in their workshops. This system has worked admirably with us in Birmingham. Last year an attempt was made to teach one of our girls to tune, and the result was most encouraging.

(4) **Mat Making**. This trade, which takes the fourth place, is unquestionably one of the most suitable industries for the

Blind, especially for those blind persons who lose their sight after attaining to manhood, or those whose ability is under the average. No trade is more easily acquired, nor in any other trade is the work of the Blind more invariably perfect. The use of frames (except perhaps in the few instances where the Blind work at home), should be discouraged, for why should the Blind, who have to compete with up-to-date sighted manufacturers, be compelled to work with antiquated apparatus? A mat shop for the Blind should be as perfect in every detail as the best factory for the sighted, and should include a good supply of the best Looms, and Trimming, Combing, Milling and Plaiting Machines.

The only drawback to the mat trade is that it is less profitable to the Institutions than many other trades; the Blind, however, earn good wages at it. In this trade, as in all others practised, specialities should be introduced. Our latest feature in the mat department is the introduction of a coir yarn coal bag made in one complete piece, without a raw edge, and having handles also woven in the bag. Besides wool, wool-bordered, brush and sinnet mats, this department can also produce cocoa matting, cider cloths, gas cylinder cases (made both in coir yarn and hemp), nose bags, hay nets, &c.

(5) **Chair Seating** (cane, rush and willow). This trade, which takes the next place, is a very suitable one for the Blind, particularly women; but inasmuch as the greater part of the work is *re-seating*, entailing the collection and delivery of (in many cases) single chairs, the districts from which orders are drawn must be somewhat restricted. Hence the trade is a limited one in all Institutions. Unfortunately, in the commoner chairs, cane seats are being largely replaced by wooden ones; on the other hand, rush seats are again coming into fashion, and these provide more remunerative work for the Blind than the cane seats. The only other kind of chair seats made by the Blind to any extent are the beautiful skein seats. Although a good price per seat is paid to the workers for these, the work is by no means remunerative, on account of the length of time required to complete each chair.

(6) **Music**. Music plays a very important part in the employment of the Blind. We will at once banish the idea that because a person is blind he is musical; however, as among the sighted, there are to be found certain individuals who excel in this art, so with the blind. Music is undoubtedly one of the chief enjoyments of all blind persons, and I therefore recommend that *all* should have sufficient musical opportunities afforded them during the time they are receiving elementary instruction to enable them to enjoy it throughout life. During this period it will be discovered which pupils evince great aptitude for it, and these should be placed under the best teachers the Institution can provide. Some may excel as vocalists, some as instrumentalists,

and some as teachers, but each and all should be thoroughly well taught and trained. Those who are destined to become teachers of music should be taught to teach before they leave the schools, otherwise they will have to buy their experience very dearly after they have left the Institutions and commence to receive pupils. Committees will experience no difficulty in securing sighted pupils who can attend at the Institution to receive instruction from the blind students. The training of musicians is of greater importance than that of those who will ply their callings in an Institution workshop, for the musician will be left to his own resources, whilst the blind worker will in every case have a foreman to overlook him.

One word with reference to organists: their instruction should include a knowledge of harmony, counterpoint, composition, orchestration, &c.; also a rudimentary knowledge of organ construction.

(7) **Mattress, Bedding,** and allied industries give very suitable employment to many blind men and women. In some Institutions they form quite a large industry, and where there are facilities for carrying on this department and there is accommodation for the bulky stock necessary, it is certainly very desirable that these trades should be practised.

(8) **Knitting, Netting, &c.** Although this occupies the eighth position in the list, I cannot recommend it as a remunerative trade, except when practised on a large scale, as at the Bradford Institution. It is, however, desirable that hand knitting, crochet, netting, &c., should be taught to the blind girls in our schools, for these are useful as a means of filling in spare time, and thus putting a few shillings in their pockets occasionally. Of machine knitting I hold a very high opinion. I have often wondered why more blind women residing in their own homes do not make knitted articles by machine and supply them to shops, large schools, charitable institutions, &c. I feel sure they could make a very fair living by this work. We have recently purchased some machine-knitted socks and stockings from a former pupil, and they were without a flaw.

(9) **Typewriting.** Although typewriting has for some years been practised in most Colleges and Institutions for the Blind, for educational purposes (and that with great advantage), it is only quite recently that it has been put to commercial use. The first Institution to open a typewriting department was that at Birmingham, where, at present, four blind female operators are employed; two other female typists are also in situations. For the refined, educated, intelligent and active blind girl there are few occupations more remunerative or more suitable than typewriting. I have written so much and so often on this subject and shorthand for the blind, that I will now say no more.

(10) **Legal and Clerical.** These professions are practised by the blind who have received a higher education, and consequently to a very limited extent. Many gentlemen have risen to eminence in these and other professions, despite the fact that they were sightless.

(11) **Ships' Fenders.** These are made at many Institutions in seaport towns. They afford very suitable employment for many, especially those who lose their sight late in life. I believe, however, that it is not a very profitable business to the Institutions concerned, on account of severe competition.

(12) **Tea Agencies.** I have sometimes heard friends speak against employment in this manner because they assert that it is but a few removes above vagrancy. I entirely disagree with them. After more than 22 years' close study of the blind and service for them, I know only too well that a very considerable number can never manage to maintain themselves, even partially, by professions or handicrafts, and to these tea agencies are a real boon. Hundreds are earning their living in this way who would otherwise be reduced to poverty. But I do not stop with these; I advocate that the poorer of our workshop employees should take agencies and work them in their spare time, thus not only augmenting their incomes by from 5/- to 10/- per week, but also obtaining thereby outdoor exercise, which is very beneficial to them. In Birmingham we have recently assisted quite a number of our people to obtain Agencies, and are well satisfied with the result. One of our men, who has only held an agency for a few weeks, told me that the profits on his Tea pay his rent and provide a Sunday dinner for his family.

Among the trades of the Blind suitable for those of little ability are newsvending, hawking, fire-wood chopping; for the smart and well informed, travelling, teaching (scholastic), and home visiting; for the partially blind, Canadian chair fitting, the making of bamboo furniture and joinery. The printing of embossed books, rope making, and shoe making also deserve mention.

The manufacture of fire lighters forms an important department in at least one Institution, and I venture to think that others might start similar departments with great advantage. Every workshop for the blind produces an enormous quantity of waste in its basket, mat, and brush departments. Nearly all this waste is very inflammable, especially the cocoa fibre. Now I have often thought that instead of carting this away to be burned, why not (after reducing the waste of the basket department somewhat) mix all with mineral oil and rosin, press in moulds and sell as fire lighters, thus turning a continual and heavy loss into labour for the blind and profit for the Institution? It is a well known fact that waste and residuals, when a use has been

found for them, have often brought huge fortunes to those who made the discovery.

One word about Massage. Much has been said in favour of the practise of this art by the Blind, and no doubt there are instances in which blind persons are well suited for it, but for the great majority there are strong moral and physical reasons why it should not be practised by them. I am aware that an Institute for Massage is in course of formation, and with the long list of ladies and gentlemen (many of the latter belonging to the medical profession) who have consented to have a voice in its management, the Institute must be a success, but then I have no doubt that only those blind persons will be selected as operators who are especially fitted for it, which very few of the Blind will be, for, while the practice of Massage is a very exhausting operation, they, as a class are physically weak. A very serious objection to blind operators is, that in general massage it is necessary to take cognizance of certain signs, so as to determine the effect which the process is having upon the patient, and for this purpose observation by the eye is absolutely essential. I have this on the authority of *The Hospital* of 13th November, 1897.

Having briefly dealt with the occupations at present most followed by the Blind, I will now turn to those not usually practised but which are likely to prove beneficial to them. From the suggestions which have been made to me, and ideas which have occurred to my own mind, I cull the following as recommending themselves most to me. The occupations are not arranged in order of merit.

(1) Commercial Agencies, *e.g.* Coal, Insurance; (2) Editing; (3) Reporting and Type-setting; (4) Lecturing; (5) Operating in Telephone Exchanges; (6) Shampooing; (7) Cigar Making; (8) Farming, Market Gardening, Cow-keeping, Poultry Rearing, &c. (for the partially blind); (9) Wire work; (10) Pottery; (11) Rush Plaiting; (12) Preparing Brush-wood; (13) Organ Blowing and Bell Ringing; (14) Chimney Sweeping; (15) Domestic Service (for the partially blind).

I should very much like to dwell at length on the merits of each of these, but time will not allow. I must, however, make a few remarks with regard to some of them, the merits of the rest being self-evident.

Reporting and Type-setting. You will, during this Conference, have a demonstration of what a blind person can accomplish as a Reporter, for one totally blind is taking notes of the proceedings in embossed shorthand. When this is done, what shall hinder the blind stenographer from setting up his report in type by means of a Linotype machine? I have been conclusively convinced that the Blind could use this machine

quite as well as a typewriter, especially as it is only necessary when an error occurs to cast the faulty line of type into the melting pot and re-set it. I have long encouraged the idea that some day, in the not far distant future, printing offices with blind compositors may be conducted conjointly with our typewriting departments.

Telephone Operating. I am aware that several blind persons are now following this calling, but it is far from general, although it is an occupation peculiarly suited to blind girls. Recently, through the courtesy of the Manager of the Birmingham Telephone Exchange, where a large number of sighted girls are employed, I had an opportunity of inspecting the magnificent switch room of the chief Exchange. I was sorry to see that the old method of signalling had given place to a new one not suited to the Blind, although I am pleased to say there is a tendency to adopt a signal which the Blind could use. I felt on leaving, that it would be out of the question to expect profit-earning companies, like the National Telephone Company, to modify their apparatus to suit the Blind. I do feel, however—and very strongly—that our own Postal Authorities, who control the trunk lines, should do so. But a strong and united front, and considerable influence, will be necessary to accomplish this. The claims of our Blind Typists and Stenographers should also be urged upon the Government, for why should not *these* Blind Experts also be employed in Government Offices? Since the Blind are restricted to so few avocations, and would in many cases be a burden upon the rates if they could not follow them, surely it is but reasonable to expect that our public bodies should employ them.

Shampooing has already been tested with good results by Dr. Fraser, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and also in London. I shall watch with great interest the further development of this art, especially as it forms another opening for our girls.

Farming, Market Gardening, Poultry Rearing, Cow Keeping, and the like, should prove suitable employments for the partially blind. Our schools are now half filled with these, and it is becoming daily more evident that special provision must be made for them, otherwise we shall soon half fill our workshops with them, to the exclusion of the more helpless 'totally blind.' It is probably well known that the North Adelaide Industrial School for the Blind, South Australia, works a farm of 600 acres, on which it employs mostly partially blind, but some totally blind men. A description of this interesting experiment is well worth perusal, and I trust that the day is not far distant when Institutions in our own country will give the plan a trial in a modified form.

Wire Work. I have recently seen some very beautiful speci-

mens of wire egg whisks, the work of Mr. Gormand, 57, Castle Street, Oxford Street, London. It would be impossible for any sighted workman to make better. Mr. Gormand is now experimenting with other kinds of wire work.

Pottery. This was suggested by the clay spinning of our little children, and a well-known gentleman, a practical designer and worker in clay, assured me that there was every probability of the Blind excelling in the manufacture of certain classes of earthenware which could be moulded on the Potter's Wheel. I have been surprised at the ready way in which blind children use this machine.

The preparation of **brush-wood** should form a very suitable pursuit, as is already the case at Kiel where ten blind men (with sighted assistance) are engaged. In these days of simple automatic brush machinery, I think the experiment would be worth a trial, especially when we remember that so large is the brush trade that huge factories are kept going in the preparation of wood-work alone.

Chimney Sweeping has often been suggested, and I really see no reason why it should not be practised with great advantage.

One word of great importance with reference to the partially blind. Before any of these are put to trades where at least a little sight is required, an Ophthalmic Surgeon's opinion with regard to the permanency of that sight should be obtained. It would be wrong to train a partially blind person in some trade which the totally blind could not follow, unless it were absolutely certain that the little sight already possessed was likely to remain.

I now come to the question of assisting the Blind to carry on the trades for which they have been trained. This is all important, for it is little short of mockery to teach a blind person a trade and never assist him to put his knowledge into practice. The opinion and experience of most experts, especially in our own country, is that the Blind are best assisted by being employed in workshops connected with Institutions. In America, speaking generally, the conditions are different from those prevailing in Europe. Most of the blind pupils of the American schools return to their own comfortable homes when their education is completed.

I shall say nothing further on the subject of workshops, as that is to be dealt with shortly by the Rev. St. Clare Hill. I propose only to speak of those blind persons who must fight the battle of life away from an Institution. Only a very few of them have the natural aptitude for pursuing their callings alone, and these should, during their training, receive special care. The trade most (indeed, almost exclusively) practised at home is basket making. While at school, those destined for home work should be well grounded in all the principles of business life, *e.g.*,

commercial correspondence, buying and selling, book-keeping, a knowledge of growing and preparing willows, &c. Pupils of this class should be taught to look to the Institution at all times after they have left it, when help or advice is needed. Materials should be sold to them at cost price, and their surplus stock of goods bought and disposed of; indeed, it is impossible to enumerate the multitudinous ways in which the home worker can be assisted. It is also most desirable that friends should be secured for them in the districts in which they live, who will take an interest in their welfare, and generally render any assistance within their power. Where practicable, the starting of small workshops with two or three workers is much to be desired, local committees being formed to manage them. When funds permit, an officer of the Institution should be appointed to make periodical visits to the homes of the blind workers, with the object of rendering any assistance, pecuniary or otherwise, that may be necessary. Sometimes it may be a little advice, sometimes a little help, sometimes a little reproof. I am aware that the chief difficulty in carrying out this suggestion is to find a suitable person for the post of visitor. He requires to be a man of many parts, earnest, experienced, reliable, and practical to a degree.

In training pupils for home work, care should be taken to teach them to make articles which will be in demand in the locality in which they will live. It is also very desirable that the Institution should employ them as journeymen for at least six months after their training is completed, in order to give them experience. A very valuable way of assisting home workers is adopted by the British and Foreign Blind Association. This Society encloses with its correspondence a "List of some blind persons in London and neighbourhood desirous of obtaining employment."

Briefly put, the Blind can be best provided for by workshops and the Saxon System—preferably the former.

BARON SCHICKLER:

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, I should like to offer a few remarks upon what we have just heard, because I think that the different countries must help each other if they can. We have heard an excellent speech about the different professions and trades of the Blind. I can only felicitate England about what was said, which was most interesting. One or two things which I had not heard of, I should like to know more about. In France there are many Institutions for the Blind, and that Institution in which I am interested is one for those who have become blind at 20, 30 or 40 years of age. One does not know what to do with them. They have been sometimes accustomed to quite different work, and it is very difficult to know what is best to be done.

We think brush making is a good trade ; we make all kinds of brushes. We also make mats that are like immense brushes ; these are made by machinery. We have looms, they can only be worked by the Blind who are very strong, as it is very fatiguing work ; all of them cannot do it. We make a great many brushes. Basket making in France is no good, as baskets always sell better when not made by the Blind. They are always very cheap. The greater number of baskets come from Germany, not from France ; so we occupy ourselves specially at brush making.

There is one thing I have not heard mentioned for those who cannot make brushes—even the commonest kind of brushes. The Association Valentin Hauy, which has done so much for the Blind, (I received a letter from the Director yesterday to greet the Conference in his name), find that blind people who can do nothing else can make paper bags. I have not heard of this in the paper just read. There is so much paper lost and wasted—periodicals and all sorts of catalogues. We send all to a central agency and it is given to workmen who make these common kinds of paper bags, which are afterwards sold to small merchants and tradesmen. It is a very good occupation, and very easy to learn. In a few days they know how to make them. I have also heard that in the École Braille near Paris they make artificial flowers ; I cannot however recommend this, as the different colours are not easy for a blind man to arrange.

There is one other thing. Our great difficulty is when the blind workmen leave our school. Men come there and learn and then go away. It depends on their capacity how long they remain ; they generally remain four or six years. Some are so extraordinarily intelligent that in less time they know how to make all kinds of brushes. Then afterwards comes the difficulty as to what is to become of them when they leave. We sometimes find a way of establishing a small trade for them, so that they can sell their brushes themselves. I think this is a very good thing. If we kept them in our school (we keep two or three to teach others) the benefits of our Institution would be only for a certain number of them. As it is, every year 10 or 12 go away. About 90 of them are now established in France. We do not, however, entirely sever the link between the Institution and the Blind ; we help them ; the material they want would cost them much dearer if they bought it in small quantities. We buy the large quantities, and sell them what they want at a reasonable price. We wait until they can send us back some money when they have sold their goods. We make the advance. I must add that we have hardly ever been cheated. Sometimes when a poor blind man falls ill and cannot continue to pay, we do not ask for the money, but all who can have always repaid conscientiously. I think this is a very good thing to be able to say. Some of these

Blind, who know nothing about brush making to begin with, come to our place. They learn, go away, and in their own country establish a small school where they teach others. One in Brittany has now got quite an establishment; he was a poor man who lost his eyesight in an explosion; he helps others and is very pleased to do so. In another place five brothers all went blind. Two of these brothers were sent to us in Paris, and now they have established themselves with the other brothers. They have taught them, and have a flourishing trade.

I thank you for your kind attention.

DR. ROCKLIFFE (Hull Institution.):

Mr. Chairman, in the first place, I must congratulate Mr. Stainsby on his very excellent Paper, and am sorry that I had not the privilege of hearing the first few remarks. Mr. Stainsby, however, approaches his subject as the paid official of the Committee of the Birmingham Institution, which is both educational as well as a workshop, and consequently he is able to train and transfer his pupils from the school to the workshops, whereas I look at the matter as the Hon. Secretary and Treasurer, as a member of our Committee and (until recently) as the Hon. Manager of 20 years experience of our workshops. That is from an entirely different aspect, for we are altogether dependent upon the various Institutions that train our children, as to whether they are taught such occupations as we provide, before coming to our shops. And as our income is probably the smallest of any Blind Institution in the United Kingdom, we have no other means of helping them to carry on any other trade they may have been taught. Mr. Stainsby's paper alludes to practically all the employments adapted for the Blind; but as "to which is best" this I think is answered in a word, viz., the best trade for the Blind is clearly that at which they can make the most wage, there is no doubt about that. Then you come to the next question: what is to be their trade? Here I think we cannot lay down any hard or fast rule, for it will vary with the special industry of the locality in which the workshop is situated, and also depend to a very great extent upon supply and demand. For example, in Nottingham, Leicester and Birmingham the special industries of each town require a special class of probably square baskets. While in Hull we do a large trade in Coal Baskets, and turn out four or five thousand a year with the 36 workmen we have, but last year during the Coal strike we were reduced to 2,000 or a few over, which shows that a smaller demand must necessarily entail a different occupation being provided.

Again referring to Cane Landers (which baskets are used for lifting the fish out of the smacks on to the shore.) The split cane used varies considerably in price, and sometimes it gets so

high that it would mean a distinct loss at the price we are able to obtain, and again other employment must be provided. The chalk cliffs in our neighbourhood also provide a certain amount of employment in so called chalk baskets, but that has fallen off. Again we used to do a large trade in grocers' baskets, but now boxes are used, the wine merchants have done the same, as they state the porters can get the wine out of the sides of the basket. Another class of baskets we make in very large quantities, at Christmas especially, which enables many who are very feeble and weak to find occupation, are cheese baskets, also salmon baskets for sending the fish by rail is a lucrative employment for those unable to make the heavier class of work.

In addition to baskets we manufacture cork fenders in considerable quantities. The secret of getting rid of cork fenders is no doubt the using of the best materials. Here again there is a great difficulty, as everybody knows, in the varying prices of coir rope. Cork fender making, however, as an occupation for the Blind, is exceedingly valuable for several reasons. In the first place it is very easily acquired, and the next thing is that they can make a very fair wage. I remember one of our men making 27/- in one week, but if they get up to 12/- or 15/- they are doing well. There is one great objection to this industry, and that is the immense amount of dust which comes from the cork and coir, making everything and place filthy, and in addition it is exceedingly hard work.

Referring to occupations for women, one thing has not been mentioned, and that is the peeling of willows, at which they can earn a fair wage. I am very glad, however, to hear from Mr. Stainsby that he can give his basket-making-women 7/11 per week, we have tried it and failed.

Last year we re-caned about 2,000 chairs at which the women earned about 6/- or 7/- a week. I would therefore impress upon the managers of all Educational Schools for the Blind that the children should be taught every class of basket-making, round and square work, and if possible such a trade as is carried on in the workshop to which they will probably eventually go, and so place them in a position to turn their hand to anything. In reference to the Adult Blind, *i.e.* those who have lost their sight at the ages of 20 to 50, I think there should be State Aid to assist them in learning a profession or trade.

THE CHAIRMAN :

As the time is so short, I shall have to ask the other speakers to confine their remarks to five minutes.

MISS DOUGLAS-HAMILTON (Indigent Blind Visiting Society) :

Mr. Chairman, I have two schemes I want to mention for the blind women. The first will be for those Mr. Stainsby talked of as the more enlightened. Mr. Knowles told us yesterday that

in Naples he found girls able to do pillow lace. After the Conference yesterday I went to a lady in the lace trade. She keeps a professional teacher for different sorts of lace. I asked her if she thought she could teach the Blind. She said she thought with a simple pattern they might learn quite well. I asked her what her charges would be, and I find that for £12 if anybody would like to try the experiment, she would undertake to train three blind people. Her charges are three guineas for 10 lessons of two hours each. She will get the pillows and all necessary for them for 9/- each, which is about 2/6 less than you buy them ordinarily; that makes 27/-, and with the £3 3s. od. for the first course will be £4 10s. od. I don't think three blind people could go to her without guides, that would be £2 more for the course. If we had to have two courses (which I think would be probable) that would bring the total to very nearly £12. She would be willing to exhibit the work in her show rooms, and could sell any amount of braid at 4d. a yard; she already exhibits work made by the cripples.

For the less clever I would suggest for your consideration a scheme on a much larger scale. It would require an invested fund of £1,000 to start with, placed in the hands of Trustees. This would bring in about £30 a year with which to buy stock for their work. I daresay many of you know that in many of the parishes in London there is a work club in connection with each parish. People buy the material at a reduced rate, voluntary helpers cut out, and it is given to the poor to work. Members of the congregation buy 10/- or £1 worth of tickets at 1/- each. The poor come to the club every week and have work given them. When they return it, 1/- is paid to them, and if they like they can buy their own work at cost price. Why not do this for the Blind? If we have the money to start it, we want to form a League to be called "Eyes for the Blind," where people may subscribe for the Blind, and buy their work, and make it known; and in this way we think we shall be able to sell a large amount. I want to urge that we shall have only the best materials, so that the Blind may get a good character, and people will see that their work will wear. I believe if we can find a material which will wear for stockings and socks they would soon get a very large trade, for I know that good stockings are impossible to buy.

MR. HENRY POWER (Massage Institute):

Mr. Chairman, I am called upon to bring under your notice the fact that a Society has been formed to enable the Blind to gain a livelihood by massage or by shampooing. We think that in that way they could get a very honest and a very good living. The Society was started about a year and a half ago, by Dr. J. Fletcher Little, and was taken up by many ophthalmic surgeons, and we have now a large Committee in London, in

which there is a strong element of lay ladies and gentlemen who are familiar with the advantages that such a Society can give to the Blind. There are many reasons why it should be advocated, and amongst those is that it can be done very well by the Blind. They can do it well, that is to say with instruction, and Dr. Fletcher Little has undertaken to give them the instruction that may be required, for a small fee. The instruction will extend over some time, but it is requisite that the learners should be of a certain capacity, clever, intelligent girls or men, and we think they can learn in the course of a few months to practise it very fairly. You will see that it is done in Japan, and the leaflets which have been distributed in this room by the kindness of Mrs. MacNicol (who is our excellent Hon. Secretary), will show that in Japan at least it is practised very successfully. We do not propose that those who are blind should advertise themselves by making night hideous with their cries, as it is here stated they do, passing through the streets to the number of three or four hundred, and shouting out that they are capable of performing shampooing or massage, but we do think that there might be under our supervision a certain central place where anyone who may require a shampooer, or a patient who wishes to have a blind masseur, or masseuse, can obtain one. We propose that only those who are females should go to females, and those who are males should go to those who are males, and therefore the two sexes would be kept entirely separate. We think that if we could get a small central place where any person who wants one, can get one easily by simply applying, we should do all that would be required. We do not propose to ask you for money, which is a great point, for we have nearly sufficient funds to make a beginning, and we hope the movement will prove self-supporting. We only want to tell you that such a Society exists, promises to be a very useful one, that it will not clash with any other Society, and that it will be, we think, approved of by the Blind. We have to thank the Committee of the Gardner's Trust for the loan of their rooms to hold our meetings in, and we think that if you all know there is such an Institution and that it will be a useful one, you will give the information to the general public that they can get blind people to do the work.

MR. MAIN (Birmingham Institution):

Mr. Chairman, with your permission I wish to make a suggestion. If the matter has already received proper attention I beg pardon. It is that the Heads of the Institutions should together endeavour to induce our Railway Companies to make some concession to blind workmen travelling on their lines in connection with their callings. A short time ago I met one of our old pupils living at Northampton, who told me that he was paying on an average to the London and North Western Railway

Company, £1 per week. The Blind are greatly handicapped, inasmuch as they have to pay guides, and consequently double fares when travelling. He told me that he had written to the Manager in London about the matter, and received a very courteous reply to the effect that they could do nothing unless representations were made from the various Institutions. I think, therefore, if my suggestion were carried into effect, it might prove a great boon to blind persons generally.

BARON SCHICKLER :

What the gentleman wishes for is done in Paris. In Paris the Railway Companies allow half rates, and also free tickets for the Blind coming to our schools. They will also allow free tickets or half tickets for the men accompanying them.

MR. MUNBY (York Institution):

May I say one word? It is to the credit of the North Eastern Railway Company that you should know that all the Blind who are connected with the Wilberforce School at York are allowed to travel for a single fare both ways.

MR. PLATER :

Mr. Chairman, how to compress my remarks into the limited time at my disposal is putting me into a fix. On the subject of Mr. Stainsby's paper I feel very strongly, and compliment him on the thoughtful care exercised, and the practicability of the matter he dealt with. He touched first upon commercial work. I think I can better illustrate the truth of that recommendation by saying that when I had learned the trade of basket-making in the Birmingham Institution, I at once started in business on my own account. The thought of going to work anywhere else, or anything different from that, never occurred to me. I felt that I had learned a trade, and I would make the best use I possibly could of it in the way of improving the general conditions of my life. In the Birmingham district where I live we have a great many nail and screw manufacturers, and nut and bolt people who use hampers. I laid myself out to supply one class of article, packing hampers, first. Then I knew that the firms I called on also used nail bagging; they also used machinery, and, consequently, bought largely in coal for the getting up of steam, etc. So I set to as soon as I learnt my trade, and started my business. I felt that I must have something to pay me for the time spent in getting orders. I waited on a leading coal merchant and got him to promise me a commission of 2½ per cent. on all business I could bring to him. I also wrote to the different nail bagging manufacturers in Scotland and Ireland, and secured an agency with E. G. Duffin & Co., Belfast. The commission was settled, and I agreed to represent them in the Midland Counties, and I may say that at the end of

twelve months all their immense stock of nail bagging was gone, and the prices had gone up 30 or 40 per cent. I represented them for three or four years, and I never made them a bad debt, and am now a customer to them instead of agent. With reference to basket-making, I strongly recommend any intelligent man who starts in business after learning a trade, to adopt also commission agencies with the manufacturers in that district; a tea agency might be added too. It was said that basket-making could not be recommended because prices were so low. Prices as a rule are not low, and the demand increases. During the year 1900, I disposed of 150,000 baskets of one kind or another, an average turn out of 500 per working day, varying in price from 4/6 per dozen to £10 10s. each. I turn out an immense quantity of baskets from £1 to £5 each, and employ a good number of people in the making of them. If it is possible for one energetic man with only moderate ability to find customers for 150,000 baskets in one year, it is possible for any blind man to get a living. I started without capital, and the first year I worked from six in the morning till twelve at night. The following year I reduced my hours of labour till ten at night, and as each year my business increased, so I reduced my hours of labour. I put very few hours in now. Just to show the result of what energy and perseverance will do, I now go to business at ten, leave at one, leave home at half-past three, and stop at six. So that I put in five or five and a half hours a day, as a sort of compensation for the many hours I worked previously, when young and strong.

I am sorry that my time is so limited, but really I think any energetic man without his sight may get a living if he is properly trained in an Institution and can get a lift to make a start; and often without this he may do.

DR. J. FLETCHER LITTLE (Massage Institute):

Mr. Chairman, I came into the room whilst Mr. Henry Power was explaining to you the great advantages of having blind men and women trained to do scientific massage, and I am glad to be able to endorse everything he said except one observation, and in looking at Mr. Smithers' face (Mr. Smithers is our Hon. Treasurer), I feel that I dare not endorse a statement that we do not want any money. We are wanting about £300 to start our Institute. I will briefly explain to you the position in which we stand with regard to those blind people. There are a certain number, not very large, who have been so carefully and thoroughly trained that several medical men in London in good practice employ them in preference to those who can see, and they are making in some instances a comfortable living. I believe that if the work of the Blind was properly organised, they would be able not only to make a living but to lay by and make a competency. The plan which we propose is to have a central

Institute where the patients will be overlooked by a hospital matron or sister, which means of course a highly trained and skilled nurse, and the patients will be received there. This great city will be mapped out into districts, and the blind operator who goes to Bayswater to a patient will go to the next one at Notting Hill, and then perhaps to High Street, Kensington, instead of going from Kilburn to Blackheath. By system and by organisation we hope to enable blind operators not only to make a living at the Central Institute, but also to go outside and get through a great deal of work in the least possible time. I am deeply interested in this work, for many of the occupations at present open to the Blind are ill-paid, and they are handicapped in so many ways, that I think this scheme must prove without doubt of great advantage to them. Already five of my seeing pupils have permanent appointments at large London Hospitals, and many other Hospitals are also employing them. Massage is now placed upon a scientific basis, and I see no reason whatever why blind persons should not hold such appointments. I am glad to say that they are well paid and their work appreciated, and if the Blind are employed in the Hospitals and Institutions of the country, it will be good for them and good for the Institutions. I should like to have said more, but the bell has rung.

MR. TAYLOR (Liverpool School):

Mr. Chairman, I must thank our friend Mr. Stainsby for the most interesting paper he has read this morning, which deals with a vast number of trades already practised by the Blind, and also many others which it is possible may be of use to them. It is most certainly advisable, when a pupil is admitted to any school, first of all to ascertain from him what is likely to be most beneficial to him in after-life. In our school we make it a practice of teaching on admission chair-caning. Our chief reason for this is, it can be done in their own homes, and also that it can be done in addition to any other more lucrative employment that they may afterwards learn.

I think guarantors and friends, in many instances, imagine that the Blind are more talented than the sighted, and frequently, after pupils have been in school about twelve months, they think they ought to be competent to go out in the world and follow a trade at the expiration of so short a time; therefore it is advisable to get them on as quickly as possible. With regard to music, it is not the intention of guarantors or parents to send a pupil to learn music merely for the purpose of enjoyment. Music is certainly a great pleasure to the Blind, but it takes up a vast amount of time to acquire only a slight knowledge of it. Therefore, I do think that it only ought to be taught in exceptional cases, and where there is exceptional talent, for a blind musician labours under great difficulties. It is impossible to

over-rate the prejudices of sighted persons against the Blind, after they have been taught music, and passed examinations satisfactorily. The clergy now require elaborate services, and the blind man must be very clever indeed if he is to get on in the world, as he has to compete with those who are not handicapped like himself. There have been certainly very many obstacles in his way, and in regard to this subject the principal one has been in the want of Braille musical notation books; but that has now been overcome by our late music master, Mr. Edward Watson, and a book composed by him has been published by the British and Foreign Blind Association. He has also published a book for the use of sighted teachers of the Blind.

As to mat-making, I quite differ from our friend Mr. Stainsby. I do think that in connection with schools a frame is more useful than a loom, as it is almost an impossibility for a blind man to use the loom in his own home. The loom ought certainly to be taught where a pupil is likely to go into a workshop.

Basket-making is a most suitable and excellent trade to teach, but it takes a much longer time to teach them mat-making, I would also like blind basket-makers to grow their own willows, like one of my old pupils is doing at the present time, and I am pleased to say, assists to cut them.

Type-writing I think is a promising occupation for the Blind, but think they will find great difficulty in getting into an office when they have been taught. I am glad to say I am sending at the present time two intelligent young women for special training to a College of Shorthand and Type-writing, with the view of eventually doing my best to get them into offices.

Knitting machines would prove most useful.

Medical rubbing I know from experience is very suitable, being one of the few profitable occupations in which the Blind can compete with the sighted, and also the pianoforte tuning and repairing, with which I am delighted to say some of our old pupils are doing well; therefore strongly advise the managers of all schools to give special training to those who have a talent for this class of work.

Domestic service is being tried at the school I represent, as I told you yesterday, with good results, but of course only in a few cases.

The tea agency is a valuable occupation, and one of my old pupils is doing remarkably well with it at Hawkhurst, and is selling about fifty pounds of tea per week, and being a basket-maker, is also obtaining orders for baskets when travelling.

After pupils leave the Liverpool School they are not forgotten nor lost sight of, for, thanks to our most energetic President, a large sum of money has been collected, the interest

of which is used for the purpose of making grants of material to help them on in business, or otherwise further their interests, but not by way of pension, as the sole object of this is to encourage thrift. I have mentioned this as it is highly appreciated by the Blind, and sincerely commend it to the notice of ladies and gentlemen connected with schools for the Blind.

COLONEL COLQUHOUN (Tottenham Court Road Institution):

Mr. Chairman, it was not my intention to make any remarks, but it has struck me that there has been a great omission in the statements that have been made up to this time, as no mention has been made regarding mattress-making. From what I have learned, mattress-making promises to be a most desirable thing for all classes of blind workers, both men and women. The women can be employed in sewing the ticks, and the men can be employed in filling them. As yet, in London this trade has not been carried on, but I believe some gentlemen who come from the north will be able to give us their experience in this particular trade.

PROFESSOR MCHARDY (Massage Institute):

Mr. Chairman, I was asked by the Secretary of the Society for Massage by the Blind to make a few remarks, and I should have been diffident in doing so but that I have the opportunity of speaking from personal experience, after a severe motor accident, of the great advantages and comfort derivable from the employment of a blind masseur. I remember many years ago, when I began to be interested in finding employment for the Blind, I had the good fortune to come into contact with Dr. Campbell, and he pointed out to me that people did not employ a cook out of charity, they employed a cook because they wanted their dinners cooked well. In the same way, the Blind ought to be put in a position to compete successfully with the seeing, and a calling should be sought for them in which they can excel—not merely approach, or even equal, but absolutely excel the sighted. From that day forth I have been looking for that calling, and did not find it until I came across massage. It is practised in Japan to an extent far beyond anything we can imagine. There, they recognise the amount of comfort and relief and rest that can be obtained by massage, and it is practised very largely by the Blind. But I must say, from the experience of those who have had massage on this side of the world and in Japan, that there is no comparison. I look forward to this new Society having such support as will ensure to the Blind not only a competency, but a very lucrative and successful business. The Blind have a considerable advantage in the practice of massage, in that many patients much prefer that the operator should not be familiar with their features and deformities. Then, sir, there is another point, and that is, as we all

know, the Blind are so dexterous with their fingers. They have a sight in their fingers which the seeing have to cultivate, and it is never out of practice in the Blind. We want a considerable sum of money—we want sufficient to do the thing properly. We must have a suitable Institution, where the scheme can be well carried out. The practitioners of massage who are without sight must be the very best obtainable. They must be sent out in a fit and proper condition. Nothing kinder has been done for the Blind than that by those who realise their claims, and have taken such pains to train them into a nice appearance. There is one point I would refer to, and that is that so many of the young in schools are tending towards blindness through compulsory education and the lamentable misuse of young eyes, and it occurs to me that with a little training these young people, who were never meant for close study, and who need to be out of doors, could acquire a good knowledge of London Districts, and act as guides to conduct the blind practitioners from spot to spot, thus rescuing from education (so called) those candidates for blindness we often find among School Board children. Their vision also would be trained for distance, and they themselves for guides and messengers. In this practice of massage by the Blind there is a very real and promising opening both to help the Blind and for the Blind to help others..

CAPTAIN HOBBS (Henshaw's Asylum):

Mr. Chairman, the last two or three speakers have quite taken the wind out of my sails in connection with massage, for it is a subject upon which my heart has been set for some time. I thought it might be interesting to hear something of the practice already in existence in connection with this employment. During the last Conference in Birmingham, the subject was mentioned to me by a gentleman who was one of the delegates. On my return to Manchester, I brought it before our Board of Management, and they consented to a trial being made. Just at that time I was fortunate in finding a lady, a professional Masseuse, who had lately come from London, and I made application to her. I then, with the help of the master, picked out three of our females of irreproachable character (I had known them all from the time they entered the Institution), and I also had the assistance of a gentleman whose wife was a professional Masseuse. He very kindly inspected the hands of the girls, and this lady taught those three. She was very successful indeed; they were examined by our surgeon as to their capabilities when trained, and were approved by him. After some little time I went to Smedley's Hydropathic Establishment in Matlock, and saw Dr. Sharpe, whom I happened to know, told him what we had done, and asked him to give one of the girls a trial. He said they had no such thing as blind Masseuses. About three months after

that I had a telegram from him, "Send down one of your blind girls for a trial for a month." We sent one, and she has been there ever since. A little time after, he wrote me to say "She is getting on very well—send me another." I sent another, and she is there still. We have now two girls, and very often have had three there. Their success was so great that the Board allowed three more to be taught. Of these, one went to Smedley's (they had four at one time employed there), and when I went there to see them later, I found that this fourth girl had been in attendance on a lady, who took her with her when she left. She remained with the lady in Bradford for six months. Since that time we have had another girl taught, the sister of this fourth one, and they are both doing very well. One of the first three trained was attached to the Hydropathic establishment in Manchester, and Mr. Allison told me that for the time he had been in the business he had never met a Masseuse he could recommend so thoroughly. She is a free agent now, and has a house of her own, and is making a good deal of money. All the other girls are doing well, with the exception of one who has not I fear, sufficient energy.

In connection with the Japanese business, just about the time that these girls were being taught, a Japanese Missionary visited Henshaw's Blind Asylum. He told the females that in Japan no one is allowed to practise massage except the Blind.

Mr. Allison says that a very great recommendation for blind Masseuses is, that when they go to treat a lady, they are not looking to see how the room is furnished, etc. They do their business and come away.

MOST APPROVED
METHODS OF CONDUCTING WORKSHOPS,
including the question of wages,
and of providing lodging accommodation for the workers.

By the REV. ST. CLARE HILL, M.A.,
Principal of the School for the Indigent Blind, Southwark.

The subject which is before the conference this morning is of universal interest inasmuch as eventual employment and means of sustenance are the ultimate issue of all teaching and training.

Education and training are only good as long as they contribute to what I consider the birthright of every human creature, the expectation of becoming by honest labour, self-reliant and independent.

On entering upon the subject of workshops, let me plainly say that I am referring to workshops, *not* Philanthropic Employment Bureaus.

In dealing with the subject of workshops, which is a difficult as well as an interesting one, I do *not* feel called upon to consider any questions connected with the training of the Blind. It is my business this morning to consider how to *employ* those who have enjoyed the advantage of training. And although I do not feel justified in dogmatizing on the subject, I venture to think that experience in managing a workshop of no mean size with some degree of success during the last 10 years may qualify me to bring before you certain suggestions, which in practice I have found to be productive of good results.

The recognised system of conducting workshops for the sighted is the result of a gradual development, and has been established after full consideration of the thousand and one attempts which have been successes or failures, in a word, the system now extant is the survival of the fittest. We are, therefore, safe in concluding that, as far as experience and knowledge go, the present system is the best.

Now the fundamental principle which should ever be in the mind of those managing workshops for the Blind is this: The shop should be conducted, as near as possible, on the lines which are followed in sighted shops.

As a stimulating and hopeful reflection I would remind you that the Blind as a class are wonderfully ready and willing to adapt themselves. This being so, the first great difficulty in striving after success has been removed.

I am, therefore, anxious to establish this important truth, that the nearer we are able to conduct our workshops in accordance with approved methods found in successful workshops for the sighted, the nearer we are to success.

Now what are the root principles ever remembered by a manager of a sighted shop?

First, everything is done on thorough business lines. Nothing is undertaken which points to what is called a business failure. Labour is employed only in that direction which promises a greater demand in manufacture and the employment of more hands. Unremunerative production is abandoned, and labour is turned into that channel which promises the most profitable return.

Now my experience goes to say, that, only too often, labour in our workshops is employed, and goods produced, without regard to this root principle in trade. And so it happens, that, in a small way perhaps, the market is flooded with one particular class of articles. The supply is greater than the demand, and manufactured goods, although perhaps well made, become unsaleable.

The effect of this is stagnation in the sale-shop and the damping of enthusiasm in the workroom.

I would strongly urge every manager to take care that the labour at his disposal is directed into those channels which may be described as productive channels ; and that directly the demand for a certain class of work is no longer existent, every endeavour be made to develop new lines and so create new demands.

Secondly, in a workshop for the sighted, every man's work must be worth while to his employer. And each artizan is employed on that class of work which he can do best, so that a double end is attained : Full advantage to the employer and highest possible wages to the employed. The immediate effect of this is, on the one hand, a desire to increase the number of people employed, and on the other, a greater readiness to be employed.

Now in our workshops frequently there is small care to so economise labour. A blind man is put down to work and produces goods oftentimes well-made, *but*, if he were put to other classes of work he would with very little encouragement produce better articles and earn more wages.

Or, he is permitted to begin and finish an article, whereas his efforts are remunerative only on a section of the labour expended.

All this goes to say that the management is not sufficiently business-like, and that the eye of the manager has not been constantly looking for the greatest profit possible on the labour at his disposal.

But I pass on to that which I consider the greatest influence militating against success.

In consequence of the large-hearted generosity of committees and philanthropic bodies, charity is sometimes mixed up with business.

Now charity is excellent by itself, and so is business. But no successful merchant would think for a moment of permitting them to be co-existent in his factory.

The giving of charity in the workshop tells dead against sound business management, and more especially so when the doles have to be dispensed by the same individual whose duty it is to press for the production of goods.

To make matters worse, I have found that not only does the manager administer the charity, but that the amount of the weekly dole received by a blind artizan is inversely proportionate to the amount of wages earned : that is, the less the man earns the more charity he may expect.

Such a condition of things makes success in the conduct of workshops altogether impossible, and, moreover, produces a yet greater evil, for it undermines the moral and manly fibre of the recipient of such ill-advised charity.

Consider for a moment.

A manager is appointed for the purpose of turning out of his shop as much as can possibly be obtained. It is his duty to so scheme the work, so arrange detail, and so economize labour, that the maximum result may be produced at the minimum cost. All this has to be done with the fullest regard to justice, equity and thrift. If a manager is appointed for any other reason I maintain that a fundamental error has been made, and such an error as will be an effective check to success.

A manager should have the capability of pressing labour, and of getting full results from those under his care. All this can be done with kindness. I go further, and say a firm management is a kind management and a just management. Also, only so long as a manager works on these lines can he do his duty to his men and to his employer. Moreover, the workpeople are happier under such a system because they ever know where they are.

Now, unfortunately, fraud always follows goodness, and directly the gate of the workshop is open to charity, indolence suggests deceit; and I would have you remember that speaking generally our people are neither better nor worse than the rest of the human family.

By this time some of you will have concluded that I am opposed to charitably assisting the blind. You never made a greater mistake. I fully recognise the inability, the honest inability on the part of some to earn a sufficient wage, and, following hard upon such an admission, I recognise the important duty of charity. But for the sake of your shop, for the sake of your manager, and above all for the sake of the moral development of the man or woman you employ, do not undermine the good work you are attempting in the establishing of a workshop by mixing up charity with business.

Do your charity by all means. The Great Providence has enjoined you to give assistance to those less favoured than yourself, but the point I am anxious to make is (1) that philanthropy in the shape of doles to artizans, however well-meant, tells against the business management of your workshop (2) that the very last man on earth to dispense charity is your manager. In a sort of way the manager *must* press his workpeople, and that duty alone makes him unfit to deal with the administration of charitable gifts.

Now I urge that you must, as far as your workpeople go, and as far as your manager is concerned, pay an honest wage for an honest day's work. It is not the business of a manager of a workshop to attempt more; and while saying this, I would urge that this principle be consistently observed in every branch of your trade. Do not press a customer to buy an article because it is made by the blind. Urge him to buy it on sound business

principles, namely, because you know it to be properly made, and because it is offered for sale at the just market value. If you make a sale on any other basis, you may sell your article but your customer will, sooner or later, remember that you have sold him, with the result that he will not return to you when next he requires a supply.

I have found it an excellent plan in the management of our workshops and our sale room, to have nothing to do with charity. Pay Trade Union Wages for piece-work and pay nothing more.

By such a system you will find more earnest endeavour on the part of your work-people, more self-respect, more self-reliance, and small chance for that great enemy of honest endeavour and enthusiastic labour—discontent.

Let me urge once again that your manager is a sound business man. Appoint him because of his qualities as a business man, and then give him full scope to conduct his shop as a business man. I am speaking to many members of committees, and I would ask you to give your manager a free hand just as the merchant gives a free hand to his manager. Do not hamper him by interference, or by calling upon him to discharge duties which undermine his position as the one specially appointed to urge his people to the full complement of earnest endeavour.

In my remarks you will observe that I have carefully avoided speaking about any special trade. Upon that subject I am *not* called to advise. If you appoint the proper man as manager he will gauge the requirements of the locality in which your sale shop stands, and it necessarily follows that to be thoroughly business-like you will manufacture only those articles for which you have a sale.

I have often been asked for my opinion as to employment of sighted labour and I have never seen any difficulty in the matter. My position is this. If sighted labour contributes to the development of the employment of Blind people, why not avail yourself of it? Let the two work together but always with this limitation:—The sighted are employed in our workshops to increase or to make possible blind labour. There are many articles, for instance, hair brushes, which will give considerable labour to blind artizans, but would be unsaleable unless finished and polished by a sighted men. What a pity to lose the great chance of additional employment for the Blind for the sake of a sentimental objection to employ a sighted finisher!

Surely the right conclusion is this:—Any legitimate and honest arrangement which eventually contributes to the greater employment of skilled blind labour should be encouraged. And if you separate all sentiment from the business-like management of your workshop, I fail to see the ground for any possible objection.

In the wording of the title of the paper which is before the Conference this morning, there is reference to a provision for lodging accommodation for the workers.

The providing of lodging accommodation is surely not to be included in the duties of a manager of a workshop. But in order to fully cope with every section of the subject named on the agenda I have carefully enquired into the matter. I therefore held a meeting of our journeymen and asked them to express their wishes on the question of lodging. As regards our male workers, there was a feeling unanimously expressed that there was no desire for such a provision. The men much preferred to make their own arrangements and to live with their friends or co-workers according as they themselves could negotiate. But with the women, in the cases where there were no relatives or guardians, the suggestion for providing a home where each would have separate bedroom accommodation with a common table for meals and a general sitting room, there was a decided expression of opinion in favour; so much so that I am taking measures, through a philanthropic association, by which it can be arranged. But with the understanding that each worker becomes a lodger in the pure business sense of the word. She shall be able to terminate the arrangement by proper notice at any time, and she will pay for the lodging in the same manner as you or I might enter upon a contract for our own accommodation.

In putting these ideas before you, I am most reluctant to bring into evidence anything which may be considered as my particular work, but I feel that I should be dealing unfairly with my audience if I did not say that these are the principles which control our workshops at St. George's Blind School. And with this result, that during the last 8 years we have been able:—

- (1) To make the demand for goods greater than the supply.
- (2) To develop in our workpeople self-respect and self-reliance.
- (3) To increase our employed, so that two years ago we had filled every available space.
- (4) To arrange for the building of a new factory, where accommodation will be provided for the employment of three times the number of hands we engaged nine years ago.

Finally, I am proud to say that our workshop is a real workshop. There is no suggestion of its being anything else. The shop clears expenses and it is a thorough-going business concern. Mind you, this condition of things was not attained speedily. It took 6 years of assiduous enterprise, sometimes in the face of considerable opposition but always with a sincere determination to develop in those employed independence and self-reliance.

If any here have any misgivings in undertaking the establishment of a workshop on the basis I have described, let me say

“it has been done,” that whereas eight years ago our workpeople did receive relief, to-day we have a different state of affairs and, mark you, with nearly all the same workpeople who were there formerly. The work is more constant, because it is turned out more thorough and consequently more saleable, and the workpeople themselves are happier and more contented.

MR. PRIESTLEY (Bradford Institution):

Gentlemen, I have listened to this paper by the Rev. St. Clare Hill with very great pleasure indeed, and there are one or two things connected with it, that personally, coming from a large workshop in the North, I should like to know about. At Bradford our turnover is about £12,000 or £13,000, and we employ 77 men and women. In keeping them regularly employed it is necessary for us to obtain contract work such as that required by the Government (War Office, Admiralty Office), Railway Companies, &c. We cannot find enough work locally to keep them fully employed. I quite agree with the remark that workshops should be conducted as nearly as possible like workshops for the sighted. But there comes the question of unremunerative production. Supposing that in the locality it is impossible to find six days' work for the employees at profitable work, are we to allow them to play two or three days a week, or are we to make a venture to obtain the best work possible? For instance, the brush-making at Bradford forms a very great part of our work, say about £10,000 a year. Unfortunately, within the last few years the introduction of machinery and of cheap female labour has almost run us out of the market. At the present time we have a Government contract for Army Blacking Brushes, and those Brushes are made in some places by females at about 6d. per dozen, others 8d. or 10d. per dozen. We pay our men such rate of wages as will enable them to earn about 14/- per week—surely not too much!—but in order to do that we have to pay 1/9½ per dozen for making them, which means that they are able to turn out about 8 dozen brushes per week. It seems to me that according to Mr. Hill's paper we are making a very great error in mixing up charity with business, because the commercial value of this labour would be about 6d. or 7d. If we only paid the same price as our competitors pay, we should send out our men on Friday Evenings with about 6/-. I would not like to offer such a sum to them for a week's work. Now Mr. Hill said that he believed (and I was pleased to hear the remark) in an honest day's pay for an honest day's work; I would like to know what that is? If we pay Trades Union rates of wages it would mean generally speaking that our men would earn 10/- weekly. In the brush trade more particularly the output of a blind man is equal to about one-third that of a seeing man. I think you will find that to be the case. That means a blind man would earn 10/- a week. By an increased rate of pay our men

average about $13/6$, and it is not enough, but it is all we can afford to pay them. The Trades Union rate is 45 knots for a penny; our men draw 30, but the sighted women draw 100 or 120. Now that is a state of things which I think can be altered. I was very pleased indeed to hear Mr. Stainsby mention this morning that the Post Office ought to employ girls as Telephone Operators. They ought also to employ blind basket makers to make their baskets, and the War Office ought to employ more blind labour in making brushes, mats, etc.; that is the sort of State Aid I should like to see. As one practical result of this Conference I do hope that in some way an effort will be made to bring this matter before the proper authorities in such a way that it will have the effect of orders being placed with Institutions for the Blind at such rates of pay as will enable them to execute the work without loss.

Last year we paid to our men and women the sum of £593, in addition to the commercial value of the work done. Unfortunately, our present income for charitable purposes is not sufficient to enable us to do that, and although we had a nett trading profit of £133, the deficiency after paying all expenses was £304.

My committee believe (and I quite agree) that it is better for the men and women to be fully employed at the best work it is possible to obtain for them.

MR. MEESON (Leeds Institute):

Mr. Chairman, as the Manager of a neighbouring Institution to Bradford, employing 53 blind workers, I have a few words to say with reference to workshops. The paper just read is undoubtedly an excellent one, and deals with many valuable points; one of them was the plea for greater liberty to be given to managers. I do think Committees make a mistake when they unduly interfere with a manager's judgment in the purchase of materials and goods and the general working of the Institution. When to buy, and what to buy, cannot be decided at a monthly meeting, and if the manager is worth his salt, he ought to have a free hand so as to take advantage of favourable offers which come to him from unexpected sources. It is an old saying and very true, that "things well bought are half sold." We hear sermons in our churches about the duties of servants, but seldom of masters, and at these Conferences a good deal is said about workers and managers, but very little about committees; and I venture to say the constitution of the Committee is a very important factor in the success of any Institution.

Another point is the employment of sighted labour, and it is a mistake not to employ such in a Blind Institution, and I will give you one or two facts in respect to that. Last year for the first time we secured the whole of our Corporation work for machine brushes and the ordinary bass brooms. We could only do that by the assistance of sighted labour, for there was more

work in the contract than our blind could accomplish. I would also have you bear in mind that sighted labour always yields a profit—an item very much to be desired, but seldom realised with blind labour. The result is, that by obtaining the whole of the contract, we are able to buy the material in a rough state and dress and mix it ourselves, and use it in a way that will yield the best results both in price and quality to suit the two kinds of brushes. By being able to undertake the making of machine brushes, our blind workers receive a considerable increase in their wages, because machine work is paid at a higher rate per number of knots set by the workman than hand work. We never use sighted labour to the exclusion of the Blind, but only as supplementary thereto, and there is not a capable and willing-to-work blind man in Leeds who is unemployed: so we are free to use sighted men when necessary. We get at times some inferior blind workmen, and have to make the best use we can of them. All here know how important it is to make goods to please the eye as well as being soundly made for good wear. With brushes, our greatest difficulty is to get a blind man to make pan work, especially hair brooms and the like, because of spreading the knots in such a manner so as to give the best possible appearance to the brushes. The middles may be safely left to the blind workers, but the outsides are best done by sighted labour, unless you have partially sighted men who may be qualified to make a brush throughout without assistance. Blind workers can make their work as sound as the sighted, whether it be brushes, baskets, or mats; but it is seldom so pleasing to the eye.

With regard to fair wages, it is of course a difficult subject, especially when, as in the case of Bradford, you employ men to do drawing work which is universally done in sighted shops by females. We only employ females at this class of work, and though we pay on an average 50% higher wages to females, compared with sighted rates, we find it much cheaper than what we should have to pay to men. We pay 9d. per dozen for drawing army brushes, for which other institutions for male labour pay 1/6.

I strongly advocate the use of machinery to save sighted labour, and we have in use now machines for finishing brushes, boring brush boards, besides band saw, grooving, trimming, and sandpapering machines; all of which save sighted labour and effect a saving in wages.

We have also introduced a knot picking machine for the use of blind drawing hands, which reduces the waste of material to a minimum, and secures a more uniform size in the knots and increases the output. We save a penny or twopence in the shilling in wages, and the women can also earn more, especially several who have always been backward with hand work.

These are points of economy which Committees and Managers will do well to consider, and I shall be pleased to give any information in detail if required.

MR. WALTER CHAMBERS (Liverpool Workshops):

Mr. Chairman, I came without the slightest intention of saying a single word, but I confess I have become inspired by the most excellent paper with which the second part of this Conference was opened. From a very small age indeed I can remember the progress of blind workshops. I suppose I was about seven or eight when I first went to see a blind workshop in operation, and that workshop has grown until it is about the largest in the country; but we are not here to talk about our own workshops, and what I wish to impress upon the meeting is that I do not think we heard one single word from Mr. St. Clare Hill that ought not to be taken to heart by every director, manager or member of committee in the country. There is no room for charity in the workshop. We, in Liverpool, are not perfect, we have not got quite so far as Mr. St. Clare Hill, but we maintain that in every department the workshop must be run, if run successfully, on purely business principles. The manager must be a business man. We do not often find business men of the Cloth, but we have got one here in Mr. St. Clare Hill. A manager should be appointed because he is a business man and nothing else, just as would be done in a private business, not because he is a philanthropic man, but because he knows his work, and knows how to make other people turn work out, and turn it out cheaply. Our philanthropic agencies often fail because they do not remember these absolute essentials which have been laid before you by Mr. St. Clare Hill. If all our workshops are conducted on his lines, we shall not only have better wages for the Blind, but we shall have employment for a very large number of blind people, and we shall do away with the necessity of discussions such as opened this section of the Conference, as to how we can find new trades for the Blind. To my mind the discussion was not satisfactory, as we got on one tack and one tack only, and I heard very little of interest about the employment of ordinary working class blind people.

As for the other matters touched upon, we should certainly relinquish unprofitable work. Such work is simply useless and discouraging to those engaged in it. I do not suppose Mr. St. Clare Hill would suggest giving twenty workpeople in his employ 1/- for labour, and after spending 1/- on material sell the manufactured article for 1/- He would drop this work and find something else for the people to do.

As regards preferential employment, the gentleman from Bradford and Mr. St. Clare Hill's suggestions are as wide apart as the two poles. Mr. St. Clare Hill wants to put blind workers

on their merits, the other gentleman wants aid for them from Government. Mr. Priestly wants Government departments to pay better prices for blind work; but I do not think we can expect a preference in price, nor do I think we should want to get better prices than an ordinary manufacturer employing sighted labour is obliged to sell goods for. If we do want it we will not get it.

Another matter in which I felt some interest was the question of lodgings for blind workers. I am perfectly certain that blind men do not, as a rule, want homes provided for them. They are a thoroughly independent lot, these blind men who work in workshops, and they are far better pleased to live in their own homes with their wives and families to look after, and to take their part in the political and social life of their town. They become much more independent than is possible with people who are congregated together in homes or asylums, though far be it from me to depreciate the value of such asylums and such homes.

I have now said all I want to say, but I should wish, Mr. Chairman, to give one piece of information which has just come into my hands. There has just passed away one of the oldest managers of a blind workshop in this country. Our manager in Liverpool, Mr. Alexander Brysson, died yesterday. I remember him thirty or thirty-five years ago as a manager of workshops, and I know he had friends all over the country, and friends in this room, who will receive the intimation of his death with great regret, and will appreciate a life which was spent in really kind endeavours to do what he could for the Blind.

DR. ROCKLIFFE, (Hull Institution.):

Could Mr. St. Clare Hill kindly tell us the average amount received by his people in wages?

REV. ST. CLARE HILL, (St. George's School.)

If you will give me a moment I will speak to a gentleman who is here.

The men workers' highest wage is 30/- per week in baskets, and the lowest in brushes is 8/4½.

DR. ROCKLIFFE, (Hull Institution.):

Before coming to the Meeting I had prepared a few notes upon the subject of Mr. Hill's paper, concerning which I purposed making remarks, but as they happen to be almost a complete repetition of what he has said, I shall only allude to one or two of them. I have down, first, "The most approved method of conducting a Blind workshop is on the same lines as a sighted one," *i.e.*—pay them trade prices, reject all bad work, irrespective of their affliction and supplement their wages by a bonus. Our method in Hull is to divide £15 per annum (not as a charity), but in proportion to the wages earned, which acts as a

stimulus to energy. One can further assist blind workers, by a Sick Benefit Society. Some years ago we commenced a Sick Benefit and Entertainment Branch, which has been most successful and useful, not only to the blind workers, but to all the Blind of our city. We have also a dining room in connection with our workshops, where the work people have their dinners cooked, and various ladies frequently provide dinners from their own resources, and read to the employés during dinner. We also organize excursions and entertainments, and assist them with sick relief when unable to work, and provide clothing, food, groceries, etc., to a considerable extent.

We, however, have no income from investments, therefore, how to obtain funds is a very great problem; for the rising generation seem averse to annual subscriptions. They will give you a five-pound-note as a donation when they will not subscribe annually. We, therefore, commenced some years ago a collecting card system, and in addition we make appeals to the public for special occasions, to add to our few annual subscriptions. For example, we rented a house at the seaside last year, and a great many of the invalids and workers spent a fortnight or a month there, and for this special object I appealed to the public for £30 and received £50; again at Christmas I appealed for £60, and received £86. In November we issued the collecting cards, and sent them to the foremen of the different works asking for sums of one penny and upwards. These cards sent out last year realised £104, and with the sums received from other sources we had subscribed £240 by simply asking for it. It is a very considerable amount of money, and very easily obtained, and I would strongly recommend "Collecting Cards" if you require contributions for an object like this to further assist the Blind.

As to the Managers, I quite endorse what has been said, every Institution must have a good Manager and pay him accordingly, and so carry on your workshop in a business-like manner, with a thoroughly business-like enthusiastic man at the head of it. The difficulty is (as in our case) to provide his salary.

As to the lodging accommodation. I think Mr. Hill is rather severe on the Committee who drew up the agenda, because I think and hope that this Conference is not supposed to be composed of Managers only. I trust we are all here to do what we can for the Blind at large, on every subject that concerns their welfare. There are three classes amongst the workshop people, the married people, single men, and single women. The single men I find, when they get above a certain age, want complete freedom altogether. As to single women, it is a different matter altogether. There we come on the subject of Homes, and I hope to say something about that to-morrow.

Mr. Meeson just stated that Committees are fond of talking of the duties of Managers, but they forget their duties as Committees towards the Managers. I think he must have had an unusual experience. We have in Hull, I venture to say, a Committee which is equal to any Committee in the United Kingdom. We always have six or seven present, and we are always ready to assist the Manager when necessary, but when not compelled, we do not apply to him for advice in matters under discussion.

MR. COLLINGWOOD (Exeter Institution):

Mr. Chairman, I should like to ask a question. It is one which is germane to the subject. I should like to know from any representative present what Institutions, if any, have established a minimum wage, and what that minimum wage is; and in addition to the bare statistics I would like to know if any manager or member of committee present would tell me to what extent the earnings would be supplemented. We will take a case in point. Edinburgh, I understand, has a minimum wage of 18/-. I want to know if any Edinburgh representative can tell me what they do with a worker who earns 9/-. In the case of Birmingham I believe they have established a minimum wage of 10/-. If the man earns 6/6 only, do they supplement it to 10/-? And if so, from what source?

REV. ST. CLARE HILL (St. George's School):

In answer to the questions that have been put to me—in the brush department the maximum wage is 15/- a week, and that man's average wage is 14/- per week; and in answer to the last speaker in reference to the difficulty of employing a manager, and that they cannot afford it at that particular Institution—I venture to say it would be a very good investment.

MR. GREATBATCH (Stoke-on-Trent School):

Mr. Chairman, I simply sent in my card to the Chairman that I might express our unbounded gratitude to the Gardner's Trust for bringing about this Conference, and enabling us to enter into these discussions. I happen to be the Chairman of a Blind and Deaf School, and in the course of my duties it has struck me very forcibly that it was our duty to try to establish a workshop to follow on that school. At the school we are able to get our children from 5 to 16 years of age. In the future we hope that we shall be able to get our children there at the youngest possible age and be able to keep them for the full period. In a word, we hope we shall be able to impart the full amount of elementary education that is hoped for, and we are trying in our little way to carry forward that point to the Board of Education, and prevail upon them to allow us to make the trade of the district a part of our manual instruction.

With regard to the Blind, we shall ask the Board of Educa-

tion to allow us, from the age of 14 to 16, to send our children part of the day to a workshop for the Blind, so that when they leave us they will be ready to go into that workshop.

With regard to deaf children, we propose to teach them artistic work, that is to say, we propose to teach them to be able to gild and draw, so that they may go into the decorating department of our pottery. Mr. Stainsby referred to the pottery throwing as a possible occupation for the Blind. I think it is totally impossible. I am a pottery man, and Mr. Stainsby made the mistake of thinking that a thrower is a designer. A thrower is not a designer—he has to carry out the designs which are furnished him, and in my own experience I have never known a blind person employed at any such work, nor do I think that it is possible. Our deaf children I am quite sanguine we shall make useful occupants of the workshops.

Mr. St. Clare Hill in his paper deprecated very strongly the mixing of charity with business. That rather touched me in the quick, because when I asked the permission of my committee to establish a workshop that point was raised. Some objected to subsidising the earnings taken at the school, but I said if this is the case I am not going to have anything to do with it. They may as well starve without going there, as go to a blind workshop where they cannot get enough to keep body and soul together. And as well as I can I shall help them. When they can earn a living wage they shall do it. We will conduct our workshops on the strictest business lines, and for that purpose I think it is very desirable that managers should be strictly business men; but speaking of our own little business matters, until those whom we take from our school into that shop can earn sufficient to keep their body and soul together, we must help them. When they can do it, turn them free, and say, "Now you can only get what you can earn." But until then it would be terrible for us to do it. In establishing this workshop considerable pressure was put on me to attach it to the Cripples Guild—very great pressure indeed was put upon me by her Grace the Duchess of Sutherland, and you know when it comes to a beautiful, charming, enthusiastic and energetic Duchess on one side, and a mere man like myself on the other, I believe my own wife would have been prepared to bet against me. But I remained firm, and I carried my committee with me. I reminded them that though Blind, they are not crippled in intellect or body. They have no sympathy with cripples. With regard to our own school I can give you some valuable information. We find there is not the remotest sympathy between the Blind and the Deaf. We were compelled, through illness, to close our blind day room and send the pupils into the deaf room. For those who may possibly not understand the position, by "Deaf" we mean Deaf and Dumb; and as they had been there

some little time I enquired whether they had enjoyed the association, and neither one nor the other did. This is valuable information ladies and gentlemen—it is not a smiling matter—I simply mentioned the fact that there is no sympathy between them. There was no touch between them.

Let us carry our Blind shops on their own merits, and enable our Blind to earn a living. But the one point in the paper which struck harder on my mind was—the not assisting those who cannot assist themselves until they have learnt a trade. Until that time comes we are bound to help them, but as far as possible we will do our very best to carry the shop on, on strictly business lines. I repeat, I profess my profound thanks to the Gardner's Trust for enabling us to follow up our North Staffordshire Blind and Deaf School with a Blind Workshop.

REV. P. T. BAINBRIGGE (Kent Workshop):

Mr. Chairman, I came to learn, not to speak—to pick other people's brains if possible! One of the speakers seems to suggest that mattress making has not been taken up in the South. In Greenwich we have tried our very best at mattress making, and we get a certain amount from Unions and other sources, but do not seem to be able to get private practice. We have tried very hard, but we have only about enough to keep one man fully at work; I should think he earns from 20/- to 25/- per week. We could do well enough if we could only get the trade. If some of the business men from the North could come and pay us a visit on Friday, perhaps they might point out some means by which we could effect an improvement.

With regard to baskets, our difficulty is we cannot make bad enough baskets! When we go in for contracts for the Railway Companies, &c., they do not want such good baskets as we make. They want them cheaper and lighter, and much worse, and we cannot make them bad enough. It is a real difficulty. Still, on the whole, I am rather glad that we cannot in this respect compete with sighted workmen! All here must learn, as I have done, much from this Conference, and I do think our very hearty thanks are due to the Gardner's Trust for getting it together.

MR. JOSEPH HALL (Swansea Institution):

The few words I have to say are in reference to Homes for those employed in workshops. In regard to those who are married or have friends to live with, I quite agree that they should live in their own homes. But with regard to the lads who have begun to learn a trade, from say 16 and upwards, we have found in Swansea it is advisable to have a Home for them. It has not been found desirable for the lads, after they have finished their *education*, to live at long distances from their work. They come from a number of places, many of them from long

distances. In fact we have our pupils from 30 different districts some of them 40 or 50 miles away, and when they have finished their education, as they cannot return to their homes, it is better for them to have a suitable place in which to lodge, and the Committee some time ago provided a Home for Blind Lads while learning a trade, and it has answered very well. They are looked after and have proper sanitary arrangements. There is a bath in the house; we found before we had a home for the lads they were unable to find satisfactory lodgings, and very seldom had a proper bath. I do think it is a great advantage to have a Home for the lads such as I have named.

MR. H. V. NIEDERHÄUSERN :

How far does basket work affect the capacity for reading afterwards? I have gone to workshops and found that the effect was to make reading very difficult for them.

MR. STODDART (Glasgow Asylum) :

Mr. Chairman, the employment of the Blind is a matter to which we in Glasgow give great attention. As elsewhere, we have no monopoly of the "classes" of the Blind: we have to do with the "masses"—with the average blind adult recently deprived of sight after he has attained an age of from twenty-five to forty, or even fifty years. It is with these that the greatest difficulty is experienced. We readily find places for the young blind leaving our school on attaining sixteen years of age, and, with an average school attendance of over eighty, it will be understood that quite a number graduate to the workshops each year.

In Glasgow, we have developed an industry eminently suitable for the employment of the Blind, viz., the manufacture of new and the re-making of old bedding. There are industries which are purely local, where certain articles of manufacture largely used in one district are useless, or nearly so, in another; but the field in which this industry may be promoted is practically without limit. It is, perhaps, the employment "par excellence" for the Blind, and, among other advantages, it has the following to recommend it: employment is provided for the Blind of both sexes and of all ages; there is no accumulation, nor deterioration of stock; it yields an excellent profit, and its use is universal.

We have been pushing this industry for years, our annual turnover in this particular department having exceeded £7,000, and, as we find it so suited to the capabilities of all grades of blind people, it is our intention, on the completion of the buildings at present under construction, to provide facilities for doing a turnover of three times that amount. In the equipment of our new bedding workshops nothing likely to conduce to

efficiency will be lacking. We are erecting a special laundry, which will be fitted with the most up-to-date machinery procurable for the thorough disinfection of all used bedding immediately on receipt, for the teasing and purifying hair and wool, and for the washing, glazing and drying soiled mattress cases. Instead of the thirty sewing machines which we have at present running by power, we hope to employ one hundred blind machinists. The sewing machine which we use is the ordinary type of "Singer," such as any lady might use at home, but it is desirable to have the machines propelled by power, as many of the blind girls are physically weak.

We pay blind girls ten shillings per week as a maximum, although they do not earn that sum; but we give them this amount because we feel that no girl can maintain herself on less. With reference to the men, on completion of the graded scale of wages for capable workers, we make their wages up to eighteen shillings per week, as it cannot be reasonably expected that a man can maintain himself and his dependents (for he generally has dependents), on a smaller wage.

At cork fender making, also an industry of the most suitable kind, we are at present employing about thirty workers. It is also our intention to greatly develop and extend our mat-making department. We have already engaged a thoroughly competent foreman, and we mean to have the best machinery obtainable.

We have a Sick Society to which the Directors subscribe from the funds of the Institution an amount equal to the contributions of the members. The payments to its funds are in proportion to the wages of the members, viz.; threepence per month payable by those in receipt of wages of five shillings per week; sixpence by those in receipt of wages exceeding five shillings, and not exceeding seven shillings and sixpence per week; ninepence by those in receipt of wages exceeding seven shillings and sixpence and not exceeding nine shillings per week; and one shilling by those in receipt of wages exceeding ten shillings per week. The benefits paid *per week* are twelve times the amount of the *monthly* contributions. For funeral alimnt there is paid thirty shillings on the death of a member's child; five pounds on the death of a member's wife or of a member paying one shilling per month; and, for other members, a proportion of five pounds comparative to the varying grades of subscription. On attaining sixty-five years of age, or if previously incapacitated, we make an allowance to our blind men of twelve shillings per week. The blind worker is at liberty to continue to attend at work if he should feel so inclined.

In our new buildings we are making provision for dining and recreation rooms, and meals will be provided at the lowest possible rate. Thus, workers coming from a distance need not

leave the premises from the time of their arrival in the morning until the close of the working day. As has been well said by the gentleman who read the previous paper, Institutions should most undoubtedly be run on purely business lines. In Glasgow we debit our Commercial Department with the actual market value of the work done, and we give augmentations or bonuses from charitable sources to enable our blind workers to maintain themselves and their dependents in some degree of comfort.

MR. F. N. MOORE (Hull Institution):

My lord, ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to have this opportunity of saying a word. I have been connected with the Hull Blind Institution for the past 22 years. Mr. Hill has raised one point that has surprised me. It is that any blind man can earn 30/- per week at basket making. Is it piece-work or time-work? [Rev. St. Clare Hill.—Piece!] Then the blind men in London are doing better than in Yorkshire. Our blind men (many of them have been sailors or fishermen and come to us at 30 and 40 years of age) learn to make coal baskets. It is a good trade, and the baskets being round are easier to make than the square ones.

With regard to what one gentleman said as to the touch of the Blind being impaired by doing hard manual labour, my experience is that many who make the baskets can only read the Moon type, and they prefer it, but those who do not, of course prefer the Braille. There are many other matters I should like to dilate upon, but will reserve my remarks until to-morrow.

REV. ST. CLARE HILL (St. George's School):

Mr. Chairman, I find round about me here that there is a slight misunderstanding; when I said 30/- it was the maximum wage, and not an average. I should like the last speaker to understand this. It is a maximum.

The next thing I should like to answer is this—I think many speakers are very much aggrieved with what I have said on the question of doles, and making our workshops exactly workshops. Let me once more refer to it, and say as plainly as I can that I am very much in favour of helping a poor man who cannot earn his living, but I will not help him out of the workshop fund. I will join any Philanthropic Institution or charitable movement to help him, but I will not help him from the workshop. I do not believe in charity being given by the same person who pays the wages, or at the same time.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23rd (Afternoon).

The chair was taken, at 2 p.m., by the Right Hon. LORD KINNAIRD, who said;—

Ladies and gentlemen, we have an interesting subject to discuss this afternoon, and I understand this morning's session (which I could not attend) was rather prolonged, so I was asked to give a few minutes' law for those to get back who have been out to lunch. We do not want to waste any more time, but will get very quickly to our subject; therefore, I won't take up your time long, but I have been asked to make a few remarks with reference to this subject. I think, as we were listening to Mr. Marston yesterday, we must have felt, first of all, how grateful we shall be that the position of the Blind is so much better than it was twenty years ago, but we must also feel that there is still a tremendous amount to be done. We, who are interested in the welfare of the Blind want to go ahead, and to hear what new methods and new helps may be given to us. I think we must all try to follow with our mind's eye what must be the position of those who are deprived of the blessing of sight. We must feel how terribly they are still handicapped with reference to the amount of literature which they have, and I think every one of us who has to do with district societies must feel that we should be very glad to help them as liberally as we have done in the past. As representing Gardner's Trust for the Blind, I think I may say that we are always ready to receive advice and criticism, and we are always ready to give liberal grants where we think a case is made out needing help. I hope that any speakers here who think that proper and intelligent progress in this particular line has been stopped for want of funds will not hesitate to make that want public, because I think there are many throughout our country and the empire who will be happy in an intelligent way to give even more money in the future than has been given in the past to help forward this branch of our work, which we are already considering.

We have also all determined that we have come here to learn, and therefore we expect to hear differences of opinion. We are always glad to welcome different points of view. I know the gentlemen and ladies here will not be afraid to state their opinions, and therefore I hope they will freely express them, but it must be done within the time allotted, and if I pull an enthusiastic speaker up and make myself disagreeable by keeping people to time, I hope he will forgive the chairman, who has his duty to perform. We must not wander away from the subject, and get on to matters which have no bearing on our question of literature for the Blind. I hope that the discussions on the questions this afternoon will be as profitable as those of yesterday and this morning.

I understand that there were a great many who wished to say something with reference to this morning's subject. Of course we must dispose of our own subject first, but if it should be thrashed out, and there is any time to spare, they will be able to revert to the other subject. Yesterday I believe all who wanted to speak found the time amply sufficient, and when I came at five o'clock I found you had retired. Any spare time that we have we will give to the subject of Workshops, but we must not infringe on our own subject.

Unfortunately, Mr. Hirst's health has not permitted his being here, but he has sent the paper, and Mr. Wilson has kindly consented to read it. I therefore call on him to read that paper.

THE NEED OF MORE AND CHEAPER LITERATURE FOR THE BLIND IN "BRAILLE" TYPE.

BY ALFRED HIRST, ESQ.,
Of Whitby.

Like a notable book of which we have all heard, this paper must be "woven close, both matter, form and style," for the organiser of this important Conference of the Blind and their friends warns me that I must not occupy more than a quarter-of-an-hour of its valuable time. It would require a literary Liebig to deal with this subject satisfactorily in such a narrow compass. Perhaps I have been honoured with this commission because it is well known that I have endeavoured in the press and elsewhere to make Braille known to my fellows in affliction and to help to provide them with an abundance of the best literature in the Braille type. On this subject I have been "right voluble," and even garrulous. To read all I have written in praise of Braille since first "like a new planet it swam into my ken," would occupy not a quarter-of-an-hour, but a long summer's day. But to my task. In his sonnets on Personal Talk, Wordsworth tells us he cared little for gossip and less for scandal. He preferred silence and a seat by his cottage fire, listening to the flappings of its flame, to mere idle talk. But still more he loved books.

". and books we know
Are a substantial world, both pure and good."

Now, Wordsworth who wrote in this way about books was sighted, and could and did enjoy the beauties of nature as few have done. He had not to lament that the sweet approach of even and morn was a blank to him and that he could not see either vernal bloom or summer's rose, or the faces of those he loved. No, it was our glorious Milton who suffered thus, and

who, in fifty-five lines of the finest poetry ever written in any language, bewailed his lost sight. He ends those lines with a mighty invocation, the full comprehension of which by the teachers in our blind schools would make my task superfluous, if not ridiculous. It runs as follows:—

“So much the rather thou celestial light
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mists from thence
Purge and disperse.”

Yes, we Blind want inward light to irradiate our minds and purge away all mists. “There plant eyes” should be the motto and object of all instructors of the Blind.

Happily the task is not a difficult one, for, thanks to Louis Braille and Thomas Rhodes Armitage, the means for accomplishing this are accessible to all. When I first became acquainted with this wonderful type, I asked Dr. Armitage who Braille was and where he lived. I wished to go on pilgrimage and thank him for his wonderful gift. He was dead, and it is now more than ten years since Dr. Armitage was taken from us. Many and great were the services which he rendered to the English-speaking Blind, but I still think the greatest was the founding of the British and Foreign Blind Association and the bringing of this type to England. The memory of Dr. Armitage must ever remain fresh and green amongst the Blind. He combined in his own person the mind of a statesman with the heart of a philanthropist, and to these, happily for us, was added what the founder of the Bodleian called “purse-ability.” And now we have lost Mrs. Armitage. It is not necessary to inform the Blind about “Her works and alms and all her good endeavour.”

Her death is the severest loss the Blind have suffered since that of her great husband. Many of us are growing old and feeble, and I cannot resist the temptation to adapt Matthew Arnold’s fine lines to our present situation—

“Yes, they are gone! and round us too the night
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.”

Braille never becomes common or common-place to me. I think I may truly say that I never read a Braille book without feeling profound gratitude to Braille and the Armitages for all they have done for us. Goethe somewhere says; “No productiveness of the highest kind, no remarkable discovery, no great thought that bears fruit and has results, is in the power of anyone; but such things are elevated above all earthly control. Man must consider them as an unexpected gift from above, as pure children of God, which he must receive and venerate with joyful thanks.” In this way and in this spirit I like to dwell upon this great gift which a benign Providence has made us.

I presume we all agree that more and cheaper Braille literature would be a good thing. But let us consider, first of all, how much we now have. What has the Association done for us since it began operations in 1870? During the first three years the sales only averaged £44 per annum. Such miserable results would have damped the ardour of most reformers, but our great benefactor, like the happy warrior, "saw what he foresaw." Thenceforward the good work went on by leaps and bounds, until in 1897 the sales amounted to more than £2,000. The total sales up to the present amount to no less than £30,000! Now, after making due allowance for the proceeds from the sale of frames and other apparatus included in this amount, it is clear that far more than 100,000 volumes of high-class literature have been sold.

In my little library of Braille books, and I say little advisedly, for I am a man of few books—there are not more than half-a-dozen for which I have not to thank the Association. I have Job, Isaiah and the Psalms, the Gospels, both in Greek and English, and the Acts of the Apostles; many of my favourite plays of Shakespeare (and of course I might have them all), all Milton's poetical works and his *Areopagitica*, and the *Golden Treasury*, of Wordsworth, which is "pre-eminently dear," five volumes of Tennyson, two of Shelley, and one each of Burns and Keats. The Association procured for me the Psalms in French, published at Lausanne in 1852, the date of which made me wonder what the English blind were doing not to import Braille until 1870. I have also the Odes of Horace, and a few other manuscript books including a volume of selections from Matthew Arnold and William Watson, and last but not least, the immortal *Pickwick Papers*. When wearied or disappointed, half-an-hour employed passing my fingers over favourite chapters of this book, so full of heart-easing mirth, rarely fails to refresh and restore me to working order. It will be seen that I have but few books, and yet I am never at a loss for good reading. I think there is something to be said for excellence of quality rather than excessive quantity. But how fares it with others? There is one place at any rate where 150 of our blind have an abundance of the best literature. I refer to the Royal Normal College. I had not long ago a type-written letter from a blind student there. The letter was a very long one consisting of many sheets, and I may say in passing, there was only one word mis-spelt and the mistake was but a slight one. The writer is a boy of 16, and amongst other things told me what he had been reading, and here is the catalogue:—Farrar's *Lives* of Seneca, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, Paley's *Evidences*, Rosebery's *Pitt*, Macaulay's *Essays*, and Jevons' *Economics*.

I have shown how the matter stands with myself. If I had

more books I should not have time to read them. Strange as it may appear to some, I am quite content.

So far as facilities for reading are concerned, I think it will be admitted that the pupils of the Royal Normal College need no pity. If I remember rightly the library there contains more than 3,000 volumes. Then we know that there is a small classical library at the office of the Gardner Trust, and also that a most valuable one is being rapidly formed at Oxford for the blind students of that University. But now let us see what provision is made for the Blind of our large cities. I will take Leeds, because I know something about the Institution there, having had the privilege of serving on its committee for several years. During that time I had much to do with Miss Eleanor Wilson, the admirable blind visitor of the Blind of the city. Miss Wilson also acts as librarian. The Corporation Free Libraries Committee not only make grants, but very wisely allow their books to be kept at the Institution.

There are about 400 blind persons in Leeds, and all of them have far more books to read than I have. About 50 volumes are all I possess. Excepting the Gospels in Greek and the Psalms in French and a few manuscript books, every one of the Leeds Blind has all I have and a thousand volumes besides, and of course without the slightest charge. It will thus be seen that however desirable it may be for the Blind of Leeds to have more Braille literature, it would be difficult to make it cheaper. Moreover, considerable additions are being made regularly. Several energetic and devoted ladies are continually transcribing new works. Miss Wilson informs me that one of them during the last three years has written out *Cameos from English History*, by Miss Yonge, Wakeman's *History of the English Church*, *Guy Mannering* and *Donovan*, by Edna Lyall, and some devotional books. When it is remembered that *Guy Mannering* alone fills seven volumes of 170 pages each, it will be seen how industrious this lady is; she (Mrs. Braithwaite), also transcribed *The Five Great Oxford Leaders*, five volumes, by Rev. A. B. Donaldson. We Blind owe a deep debt of gratitude to these volunteer lady writers. It is simply amazing to find how accurately they transcribe these long works. Not long ago I corrected for the Association the first copy of Mark Patteson's *Sonnets of Milton*—a most valuable work which it is to be hoped will be made a class book in all our schools. In the introduction, which occupies about 50 pages of interpointed Braille there were only two very slight errors. Some of the manuscript books supplied to me by the Association are marvels of correctness, and so far as their stereotyped books are concerned many of them are absolutely correct. I have read the 4 volumes composing the *Golden Treasury* of Wordsworth over and over

again and so far as I know 3 volumes out of the 4 did not contain a single mistake, and the other had but two which have been corrected. When I want to surprise a sighted visitor I show these volumes and inform him or her that the price is 5/- for the lot. But Leeds some will say is a large city and possesses unusual advantages. Whitby where I live is a small town of about 12,000 inhabitants. I have no difficulty in keeping the blind of this little place well supplied with Braille literature—both books and magazines. The Association supplies the blind workshops here with boxes of books which subscribers to Mudie might envy.

From the foregoing I think it will be agreed that although much remains to conquer still, much has been already conquered. No doubt a large field is open for an Institution like the National Lending Library to carry on its valuable work amongst the Blind of our small towns and villages. I was struck by the following common-sense remark in the report:—

“The purchase of books in the Braille type by the poor is impossible owing to their costliness; whilst to those possessed of means, the difficulty of procuring the necessary space for the accumulation of volumes of such bulk is serious. By the aid therefore of a circulating library alone can a varied and constant supply of literature be provided for all classes.” This Institution finds the carriage of Braille books a serious item and especially is this the case with the heavy manuscripts. I have often been startled with the amount charged for the postage of a Braille book. In Canada they manage these things better. All blind literature is carried free, (but then they have no torpedo-boat destroyers.) I hope it will be possible to put this library on to a really national footing and raise a fund to enable it to supply the needy blind with literature free of charge. It already possesses about 5,000 volumes and in going through the catalogue I was much impressed with the admirable quality of the books.

It is helped by 75 volunteer writers, one of whom has transcribed 70 volumes, including Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic* and his *United Netherlands*—a truly Herculean task. It is not only in England that the Blind are being supplied with Braille literature. Great progress has been made in our Australian colonies during the last 20 years. In 1881 I arrived in Melbourne just in time to prevent the adoption of one of the many American types. I left some of my books at the St. Kilda Institution and offered prizes to those pupils who should become most proficient in Braille. Since then the good work has gone ahead by leaps and bounds. An Association of Braille writers has been formed and already a very large library is the result. I asked a wealthy sheep-farmer to send me a cheque to pay for a case of all our best publications. The cheque came and the books were despatched and another friend of mine wrote me that

one day whilst he was in the library an old blind gentleman came in to change his book and was loud in his praises of the quality of the new arrivals—the Shakespeares, Miltons, Wordsworths, etc. ; Quite recently I received an application from Mr. Hendry, the able blind manager of the Institution in Adelaide, asking me to contribute to a Braille monthly magazine he had started for the Blind of South Australia.

Now whilst thinking it well to show how well off large numbers of the Blind already are, I have always worked hard to secure for our people more and cheaper Braille literature. I always remember with satisfaction that a suggestion I made in my Monograph on Dr. Armitage that a fund should be raised and called “The Armitage Memorial Fund” was adopted and upwards of £4,000 subscribed. The money was invested and the income is used to cheapen the publications of the Association. Subsequently the Clothworkers Company accepted the trusteeship of this fund, and the Blind are to be congratulated upon this very significant fact, for all who know what princely gifts this wealthy company have made to Leeds and other places for educational purposes, cannot but feel confidence that in future, notwithstanding the serious loss sustained by the death of Mrs. Armitage, the work will not languish for lack of funds. Some of us had hoped that all financial difficulties would have been solved by Mr. Carnegie or Mr. Passmore Edwards or by both, but neither of these gentlemen has, as yet, remembered the Blind when dispensing their largesses.

Let me add here that I have never asked the Association to make a free grant of books to deserving blind persons without my request being promptly and cheerfully complied with. I will mention but one case out of very many. A year or two ago, a blind man wrote from Capetown to thank me for something I had written which he said had cheered and comforted him. He added that he was very fond of good poetry. He was laboriously writing out in Braille some of his favourite pieces, all of which had been published by the Association. I proposed that Isaiah, all Milton, Wordsworth, a few plays of Shakespeare should be sent him. The case was packed and sent carriage paid, and on its arrival the poor fellow was transported with delight, and wrote saying that he seemed to be in a new world. I wish that nothing more harmful than this box of books had been sent to South Africa during the last few years. I often find great ignorance prevails about our publications. Visiting a blind lady one day, I found her copying out the Prayer Book version of the Psalms. She was unaware of the beautiful Cathedral Psalter in seven handy volumes which the Association published long ago.

Although not strictly within the scope of this paper, there are one or two suggestions I should like to make. We possess

some admirable monthly and bi-monthly magazines. One of the editors—say Miss Nevill or Mr. Illingworth—would render us a great service by procuring *The Book-Lover's Enchiridion* by the late Alexander Ireland. During his long life he mixed with two generations of literary people. In his youth he spoke to Scott at Abbotsford, and was an intimate friend of Thomas Campbell, whilst later he visited Wordsworth at Rydal. He did excellent work both journalistic and literary. He was an extensive reader and carefully noted down all that the best writers had said in praise of books. He published them in this manual with a brief but admirable preface. If one of our editors would, month by month, give us one or more of these extracts, an immense service would be done to our people, for I am persuaded it would tend to increase greatly their love of good literature.

Then I should like to remind all clergymen and ministers that upon their recommendation the Bible Society will supply to any needy blind person one book of either the *Old* or *New Testament* yearly. If the clergy will only remember this, a large number of the deserving blind will soon possess a few books of the Bible.

The question of contractions is to be dealt with by an expert, but I should like to say how glad I should be to have the Psalms in pure Braille, *i.e.*, with the authorised contractions only. At present, after teaching Braille to some blind person, that person finds that before he or she can read the Psalms, another batch of what I call "empirical" contractions have to be learned. Moreover, I object most strongly to the numbering of the verses in the books of the Old Testament. I cannot imagine why from verses one to 10 we have pure Braille, and then from 11 to 39 another system which necessitates a mental calculation before one can find out what number is meant, and then after 39 pure Braille is again used. But an example will best illustrate this absurdity. On page 71 of the 1st volume of the Psalms, we are informed by the usual heading that part of Psalm 37 is to be found on that page. In numbering the page and the Psalm pure Braille is used, but to inform us what verses are on that page the 27th and 36th signs are employed, which happen to be the contractions for the word "for" and "ed." This method is followed up to the 39th verse, where the sign for "ow" is used. I think it will be admitted that it is high time for this complicated and mixed system to be abolished. When I want to find a favourite verse, it should not be necessary for me as a preliminary to perform a sum in arithmetic. In the Acts of the Apostles the headings of the pages are all in pure Braille. These inform us, perhaps, that verses 33 to 39 are on a certain page. On trying to find these verses one has to remember that the contraction for "sh" is the 33rd, and that for "ow" the 39th. Could

anything be more ridiculous? The absurdity is heightened by the fact that a page at the commencement of the volume is occupied with explaining these vagaries, and to explain them pure Braille has to be used. It is necessary to inform us, for instance, that the contraction "th" stands for 34, etc., etc.

I had intended to refer to the number and quality of the educational works—Greek, Latin, French, German, Mathematical, etc., etc., which the Association have given us and the immense quantities of music, but I think that I hear somebody say, this paper of Hirst's is stopping the way. Horace in describing a long journey from Rome to Brundisium tells us that he ended his trip and his paper simultaneously. I end this paper because my time though not my theme is exhausted.

THE CHAIRMAN :

I will now ask Miss Moon to read the paper on the Moon Type.

THE NEED OF MORE AND CHEAPER LITERATURE FOR THE BLIND IN "MOON'S" TYPE.

BY MISS MOON,

The daughter of the inventor of the Type.

The need of more and cheaper literature for the Blind, in Moon's type, is a subject that has for many years been pressing upon us, and I am glad that an opportunity has been afforded me of bringing it before this Conference.

It is beyond question that an increased literature is needed in the "Moon" type by the many thousands of readers using the system, and I am frequently being urged to prepare a larger number of fresh books.

Simultaneously with the kind invitation of The Gardner's Trust to prepare a paper upon this subject, came to me the announcement from Philadelphia, in the United States, that an effort is to be made by the "Pennsylvania Home Teaching Society for the Blind" to raise a special fund to assist in stereotyping a larger number, and a greater diversity of books such as the Blind demand in the "Moon" type. It will thus be evident that the question as to new books is receiving world-wide attention, and we have arrived at a point, where it should be clearly answered, and steps taken, to provide that which is universally demanded.

The many Home Teaching Societies for the Blind in Great Britain, as well as those in our Colonies, and the United States, have proved the possibility of teaching the blind adults to read, and a thirst for reading matter has thereby been created, which

makes them with vehemence exclaim, "Give us more books—such as the sighted have."

It is well for me here to state that the Home Teaching Societies, of which there are now 80, were originated to teach the Blind to read the "Moon" type, but of late years have also been the greatest help in bringing the young Blind before the notice of those interested in their education.

For many years we have advocated the addition of a library of embossed books to all public libraries, and it is gratifying to learn that many of the Free libraries in England have responded to the urgent desire of the Blind to give them the embossed literature for their use, and also the Free libraries in the United States are adding "Departments for the Blind," from which they can borrow embossed books.

The growing demand from the great body of the Blind throughout the world, is for books of a miscellaneous character. It, therefore, becomes most desirable that those who possess the means, should aid in the development of a larger and more varied library of such books.

Hitherto we have been very much handicapped on account of the expense in producing plates. The Moon system, being a line one, it is much more expensive, not only to prepare the plates from which to emboss, but a much greater pressure is required to produce good impressions, far greater than is needed for a dotted system. This involves powerful machinery, as we need an enormous pressure.

The plates for the dotted systems can be produced by a very simple method of puncturing brass plates, either by a machine made for the purpose, or by hand; but it is not possible to do this with the "Moon" type, as the sheet of metal buckles, and will not bear the strain necessary to get the depth to produce a good impression.

By this I wish to show you that plates of a solid nature from which to emboss must be made, and it is the expense of producing these plates for which funds are so greatly needed. Each plate cannot be produced under 3/-, therefore a volume of 100 pages costs nearly or quite £15. We have found it is not wise to put up the type and distribute it after taking off a large number of impressions, as the expense of the paper, etc., would be very great. Then storage room would have to be extensive, and not only this, when the edition is run out, the whole of the setting up has to be done over again, if the book is one much called for by the Blind. We adopted that plan, however, for a few years, but found it a very unwise one to continue, although it served a need at the time.

In consequence of the limited amount of money which has hitherto been at the disposal of the "Moon" Society, it has

been impossible to produce any but the works which were urgently needed, or such as were of a permanent character.

The Bible has justly taken precedence of all other publications, but a large amount of religious, educational, poetical and entertaining literature has also been published—although, of course, upon a far more restricted scale than the literature enjoyed by the sighted. There is, however, no reason why it should continue to remain so restricted, for the “Moon” Society has its stereotyping and embossing establishment at Brighton, fully equipped and prepared to stereotype new books as soon as money is forthcoming to defray the expense of production.

Money is the only thing needed for the purpose, and this might be obtained either by the formation of an Endowment Fund, from which an income could be derived for the steady production of new books, or by the contributions of sums of money from individuals, and Societies, to defray the cost of one or more books at a time, according to the choice of the donors. The latter is the method by which the existing embossed works have been produced, and it is to be fervently hoped that such individual benevolence will not be discontinued, but to place the undertaking upon a firmer basis the Endowment Fund should also be promoted so that a steady increase in the number of new books would be assured.

The use of the “Moon” type has long since passed the experimental stage, and workers amongst the Blind, almost everywhere, have come to acknowledge that it is the easiest one, for the adult blind to feel, and by which to learn to read. Therefore, there is no need for hesitation or delay in providing a much larger and diversified library of books in this type.

Having said so much as to the “need of more literature in Moon’s type,” we have to consider the very important question of “cheaper literature” in that type.

In the first place it should be stated that all books in the “Moon” type, as in the other types, are sold below the cost of production, and it is evident that if the prices are to be cheapened many more copies of the books must be printed at one time than is possible at present, in consequence of the large quantity of paper and binding materials consumed in printing and binding larger editions. The paper used is a good, strong one, of a superior quality, and is necessarily costly.

When the embossed plates are once made, any number of copies can be taken from them, but of course the larger the number at a time the better, so as to avoid shifting the plates too often, although this would of course involve large storage room.

Every one is familiar with the fact that it is always proportionately cheaper to print off a large edition than a small one for the sighted, and the same applies to books for the blind,

with this exception, that the edition of the books for the sighted probably yields a profit and encourages investment of money, whereas that for the Blind yields no profit, and this suggests the question as to where the large capital for purchasing paper and other materials is to come from, in order that the cost of production and consequently the selling prices of the books may be materially reduced. A considerable outlet of a larger stock of books would be found if help could be rendered to the Home Teaching and other Societies, by making them a grant of books each year for the purpose of keeping a complete set ready for their readers, and a great service would be rendered, as some societies have such small incomes at present that they can only afford to purchase a few books, or perhaps none at all, and thus the Blind have to read the same books over and over again, until they get dissatisfied and give up reading altogether. I know there are many towns in Great Britain where the Blind Adult population is large, and where, some years ago, books for a library were presented by the late Sir Charles Lowther; the Blind then greatly enjoyed their reading, but now, they are neglected and never get a fresh book, because, I am told, there are no funds from which to purchase them.

Now to my mind this is a very serious matter. The young blind have every facility given them, but the adult blind who form from 70 to 80 per cent. of the blind population have no fresh reading matter, although we could supply a large number of books of the most interesting and varied character beyond what they can at present get from their libraries. What is needed is a fund from which societies or individuals may have books granted either as a gift or at a small charge. How this is to be accomplished is, of course, open to consideration.

Occasionally we have suggestions as to the use of more contractions in the "Moon" system, with the object of effecting a lessening of the bulk of the books, but our experience, in England as well as that of our friends in America and Australia, goes to show, that such suggestions must be adopted with the greatest caution. It may be taken as self evident, that beyond a certain limit, the more a system of embossed type is burdened with contractions, the more its usefulness among the adult blind is impaired.

The few hitherto employed in the "Moon" system are easily remembered and readily understood by our blind adult readers, but, to adopt more would be a burden to the memory and would tend to discourage the learner.

I have recently learned that the large number of contractions adopted in various dotted systems, are fast bringing them into disrepute, and if persisted in we shall doubtless awake ere long to that fact.

We, therefore, cannot look with favour upon any attempt

further to lessen the bulk by abbreviating the text of books in the Moon type, more especially as I have received very strong objections from sources which I cannot but recognise as most reliable and decisive, as they are given me by some of the most devoted workers among the Blind in some of our principal cities.

If the Moon Society possessed sufficient capital to invest in large quantities of materials, and grants were made possible to needy societies, the problem of cheapening the prices of the books would soon be solved, for at the Brighton establishment over sixty two thousand stereotyped plates are ready to hand, and even with the existing presses, larger editions could be struck off at less cost for labour than the smaller editions to which, for want of funds, we are at present restricted. The literature now comprises 510 volumes in English, and 272 in Foreign languages.

We seem to have reached a point where action of a decisive and comprehensive character is needed, in order that we may avail ourselves to the utmost, of the resources already at our disposal. Many circumstances seem to indicate that the time is fitting for the consideration and adoption of some great scheme, whereby the number of the books in the Moon type may be greatly increased, as well as cheapened in price. Only a few years ago we issued a limited edition of "John Halifax, Gentleman," which was printed from movable type. I have just heard from Philadelphia that the Blind in the States are much disappointed that no more copies of it can be had in the type and the "Pennsylvania Home Teaching Society for the Blind" is desirous of helping to meet the cost of stereotyping the work, as it has become very popular amongst the Blind, and many more copies are needed besides those at present in the library.

I must add that we are now preparing stereotyped plates of this work, five volumes being now ready.

If the consideration of the subject of our paper by this Conference shall result in the formation of a fund or funds, to promote and accomplish the objects so dear to our hearts, our meeting together will not have been in vain, and the Blind throughout the world will be greatly helped and benefited.

THE CHAIRMAN :

The subject is now open for discussion, unless in the opinion of the meeting you would rather have the next paper and have the discussion on the whole subject. If this is the feeling of the meeting, I will now ask Mr. Illingworth to kindly read the paper on the Uniform Braille System.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Edinburgh School) ;

My Lord, before reading the paper, if I might be allowed a minute, I would like to explain that until last night I had not an

opportunity of looking into the scheme which Mr. Knowles has prepared for Oriental Braille. I believe if I had had the scheme in my hand before I wrote my paper, I might have modified some of the expressions which will be found therein. I believe it is possible to get a copy of that scheme, and I would commend it to your consideration, as it is worthy of your very careful study. Especially as, I believe I am correct in saying, the British and Foreign Bible Society are seriously contemplating striking new plates for the Braille Bible, and in this connection they are waiting to see what is the opinion of the Conference as to the emendation or alteration of the Braille System as at present used, before they proceed with their work. I sincerely hope that (although under the rules of the Conference it is not possible to move any formal resolution) this much vexed question, that has often been called "The Battle of the Types," may be carefully considered, and that the Conference will not end, as so many on this subject have done, in smoke. We *must* come to something practical. I would like to add that in my paper I advocate no particular system whatever. I leave myself open to conviction; my opinion is entirely unbiassed. I am a sighted man, and believe that the Blind are the best judges of the best type for the Blind, and whatever is acknowledged to be the best type by the Blind themselves I am quite willing to accept, and, if necessary, to put my own personal opinion entirely on one side.

UNIFORM BRAILLE SYSTEM.

BY WILLIAM HENRY ILLINGWORTH, ESQ.,
Headmaster of the Royal Blind Asylum and School,
West Craigmillar, Edinburgh.

When the Secretary of the Gardner's Trust invited me to contribute a paper on the above subject for this Conference, I confess to a feeling of gratification, although I was aware of the difficulty and magnitude of such a task; seeing it is a subject which has engrossed my attention for the past ten years, and upon which I have written much and received a considerable amount of correspondence owing to my official connection with *Hora Jucunda*. I therefore beg to thank the Committee for the honour they have thus conferred upon me.

And here may I be allowed to tender my best thanks to the many kind friends who have supplied me gratuitously with an immense amount of literature bearing on the subject of embossed types, etc., which has been of great service to me in the preparation of this paper; also to those ladies and gentlemen who have given me the benefit of their advice freely and directly through my circular letter and otherwise.

I sincerely hope that none of the members of this Conference anticipate that in my paper to-day it is my intention to submit for their consideration any scheme of "Uniform Braille System," cut and dry and ready for immediate application if approved. Out of a chaos, born of conflicting opinions and petty jealousies, combined with an almost incredible amount of apathy, indifference, and indecision such as exists in the meantime in the Braille world, it would be impossible by any means short of a miracle to create or formulate such a scheme. I beg to submit that, though the time may be quite ripe for a serious attempt being made to improve the existing state of matters, it will require years of patient thought and interchange of opinion before a perfectly uniform and practical system can be evolved or devised. We have the men and women and we have the brains essential for such an undertaking, but what we lack, or at any rate have lacked in the past, is the power, or the will, or both, to focus and concentrate our united experience and skill, with absolute singleness of purpose, and charitable, sympathetic self-abnegation, on a determined effort to make the Braille system—if that system be the very best system—as perfect and simple as possible, and worthy to be the tangible exponent of the most powerful and universally spoken language of modern times.

We hear often, and are treated to examples of, "English as she is spoke," but I venture to think that for variety and specimens of the grotesque, this pales into insignificance before "Braille as she is wrote."

Since I suppose I may take it for granted that most of the members of this Conference are to a greater or less extent Braille scholars, I may be pardoned for entering pretty fully into technical details where occasion demands.

At the outset I think it desirable to give a brief history of Braille, English and American, with a few words on the New York Point, so that, as I proceed, references to any or all of these may be the better understood.

Louis Braille was born on 4th January, 1809, at Coupvray, near Paris. At three years of age an accident deprived him of his sight, and in 1819 he was sent to the Paris Blind School—which, you will remember, was originated by Valentin Haüy. Here he made rapid progress in all his studies. He learned to read by the embossed Roman letter, which was exclusively used at the time and which continued popular for fifty years in that country and our own, and is even still used in many schools in America.

In 1826, now a promising organist in a Paris church, Braille was elected Professor at the Institution. Among other works he wrote an embossed treatise on arithmetic. Both as pupil and

teacher he spent most of his leisure in trying to find out a system by which the Blind could write in relief, and to this end studied various methods in which arbitrary characters were used.

One which had been invented by M. Barbier appeared the most promising. M. Charles Barbier was an officer of Artillery, who being rich and philanthropic was interested in the Blind, and did what he could to promote their education. In 1825 he suggested embossing by means of a point method, the character containing 12 dots, 6 high and 2 wide, arranged in a rectangle. The character thus obtained was large and unwieldy though capable of an almost unlimited number of combinations.

Louis Braille cut Barbier's character in two, and thus produced his well-known 3×2 . On this basis Braille was the first who devised a practical scheme for printing and writing in tangible form, suitable to the tactile capacity of all. This was in 1829. After some slight modification it reached its present form in 1834 and is the system which has since borne his name.

We do not find however, nor does it appear, that Louis Braille, in arranging his system paid attention to any other considerations than one, namely, a methodical arrangement of the letters of the alphabet—the second ten letters being formed from the first ten and so forth. Now whilst this may be some slight aid to pupils learning the alphabet, it is unscientific and clumsy when applied to literature in general; and in these days when reading is taught to a great extent without children learning the alphabet, as such, at all, that small advantage vanishes into thin air.

It appears strange on the face of it, that we, at the beginning of the 20th century should be willing to accept as the best possible exponent of literature for the Blind, an arbitrary arrangement of arbitrary signs given to the world seventy years ago, without first having satisfied ourselves that this system and these arbitrary signs are the best that the science and art of our time can supply.

I ask you, my friends, in common fairness whether it would not have been wiser to have had this primary question of the alphabet, or I should prefer to call it "Root Braille," settled by popular vote or plebiscite before proceeding to elaborate such an extensive superstructure as has been compiled at an immense expenditure of time and labour by the sub-committee of the British and Foreign Blind Association?

For my own part I must candidly confess I have a strong leaning to the "American Braille" arrangement, root and branch—the contractions, like the letters, being carefully and scientifically planned; and, as you will see by referring to the leaflets that I have placed in your hands, nearly one half of the letters of that alphabet are the same as our own, so that the labour of learning it, by those conversant with English Braille would be very small.

I would strongly urge that a copy of the American Braille System, accompanied by a note prepared by an able exponent of that type, should be sent to all those who have been favoured with a copy of the "Recommendations" of the Contractions Committee, so that they may study the two together and vote accordingly. If that committee will kindly supply me with the necessary names and addresses, I will undertake to carry out this project.

If we are to have a "Uniform Braille System," let us have the best in the world.

But to return. The period above mentioned, 1825 to 1835 appears to have been a period of universal activity in matters relating to embossed literature and printing. In Britain we had Gall (of Edinburgh), Alston, Moon, Fry, Frere and Lucas, all bringing out their own peculiar types, and each having his own partisans. In America there were Mr. Friedlander, Dr. Howe, of Laura Bridgman fame, and others.

Although, as I have said, Braille perfected his system both for ordinary reading and writing, and for Musical Notation in 1834, it was not until 20 years later that it was officially adopted at the Paris School, and that was when Louis Braille had been dead two years. Thus, like many another reformer, he did not live to see the triumph of his labours.

About 1859 or 1860 the Braille system was introduced into America, and was taught with some success at St. Louis. In the year 1868 The British and Foreign Blind Association came into existence, and, having brought Braille into this country, gave to it a powerful impetus by printing and disseminating books in that type. Old prejudices died hard, however, not only in this country but also in France and America. Even in 1878 there was no uniform system of embossed literature in France; for, in the "Report on articles exhibited by various European Blind Institutions at the International Exhibition at Paris in 1878" I find this paragraph:—"Although the Braille type is a French invention it seems a mistake to make use of no other system of reading and writing. Valuable as it is, there are advantages connected with other systems which ought not to be overlooked in a National Institution like the Paris School."

In the same year the late Edmund C. Johnson, Esq., for so long a Director and patron of the Southwark School, and also a member of the Royal Commission on the Deaf and Dumb and Blind at a much later date, along with the Chaplain, Rev. B. G. Johns, reported on the Paris Congress to his Committee, and on page five of that report I find "After much discussion, in which Mr. Johnson frequently took part, the Congress dealt with the question of "Unification of the systems of reading" as the special aim of their labours, which they hope to reach by a

universal adoption of Braille's system as used in France, applied to all processes of reading, writing and music, as well as to more advanced studies in language and science."

"We, however, are of opinion that the entire adoption of any arbitrary system, such as Braille's, would tend to increase that very isolation of the Blind which it is thought to lessen, and to cut them off more and more from the rest of the world. We are convinced that they should, as far as possible, read and write, and gather information in the same characters as those used by the sighted. If all men were blind, nothing could be better than Braille; but as, happily, the Blind constitutes only a small minority, they must be bound fast to the majority by the adoption of that character of letter known to the civilised world. The Braille system is a mystery to all but the initiated; the Roman letter is known wherever English, French and German are known—in a word, everywhere. We hold, therefore, to the Roman letter as the primary foundation of the work in general, reserving for Braille its own special department: for the notation of music, which only a small portion of the Blind can hope to pursue except as an amusement, and for mathematics, composition and such higher studies as the few richer, and more intellectual can cultivate."

At the same Conference the late Dr. Armitage read a paper on the "Education of the Blind in ordinary schools in England," in which he states that the London School Board, having called a Conference of all their Blind Teachers and others for the purpose of considering what was the most suitable type for educational purposes, and all the Blind, with two exceptions (Dr. Moon who voted for his own, and another who voted for Roman), having given their verdict in favour of Braille, the School Board deliberately determined upon continuing to use Moon's system until school books in Roman type should be printed. Dr. Armitage goes on to say: "This extraordinary decision can only be accounted for by the difficulty that the seeing have in understanding the educational wants of the Blind, and their consequent tendency to retain those methods of education which they can understand, and reject those which do not at once recommend themselves to the sense of sight."

Thus it will be seen that both in England and France there was, even at so late a date as 1878, considerable diversity of opinion as to the claims of Braille as the best method of reading and writing for the Blind.

In America the same thing occurred; Mr. Waite of New York, inventor, or perhaps the perfecter, of New York Point type, tells us in his "Review of the origin and development of embossed literature," page 10, that "the merits of the Braille system were recognised chiefly by a few blind persons who were

engaged in teaching. It was proscribed as being arbitrary on the ground that it was unlike the ordinary forms of letters." For these reasons the use of the system was restricted to very narrow limits, as it depended upon individual interest and enterprise only.

One of the most eminent teachers of the Blind and successful of School Superintendents in America, writes me as follows, under date 17th March of this year:—"The New York Point, as printed, has always been open to grave objections. Many persons who really understood Braille gnashed their teeth that an inferior system should dominate a superior, but Braille lacked a single powerful champion."

Very intelligent Blind opinion in Boston undertook to do what it could. Mr. Anagnos was openly antagonistic to the New York Point, and being forced to admit into his school some point system for writing purposes, allowed Mr. J. W. Smith, a blind teacher who understood both the good and the bad points of the European Braille, to try his hand at devising a better. Mr. Smith and his coadjutors laboured assiduously, re-arranged the characters on the principle of frequency of recurrence, eliminated what seemed to them the illiterate crudities of the English system, and called his code "Modified Braille." This code he gave to our Convention in 1878, with full explanation as to its merits. It was used in the Perkins Institution from that time on.

But its presentation at the Conference aroused fierce antagonism and activity among the devotees of New York Point. In fact Dr. Armitage, in his "Education and Employment of the Blind," states that the use of modified Braille is not likely to spread beyond Boston.

Those of us teachers who taught in Boston after experience in the Royal Normal College, could not but admit the superiority of the new code for school and all other purposes. St. Louis stood by the only Braille she knew—the old Braille; and various other independents were clamouring for any point system superior to New York Point.

By 1900 the feeling for Braille had become so strong that at the Convention the Braillists met, and appointed a committee of three to decide upon the code to adopt. Dr. Sibley, Superintendent of the Missouri school and a member of this committee, abandoned the old code after a study of Mrs. Plumtre's exposition of it. His decision made the committee a unit for the new code. The new name "American Braille" Dr. Sibley gave, and we accepted. We did not consult the British and Foreign Blind Association, first, because we were required to report without unnecessary delay, and secondly, because we felt that any attempt to get them to abandon or modify their code to suit modern ideas

would be fruitless. Besides, does not Dr. Armitage state in his book that a similar modification of the Braille had been proposed both in England and on the Continent and turned down?

So far as I am now aware every American believer in Braille—except one—adopted our Report, thus showing that American Braillists considered the new code scientific, up-to-date, well adapted to general, and particularly school use. Though our school work has been revolutionised by so much and so easily obtained embossed matter, yet we cannot but regret that things are as they are. Had it seemed at all a feasible and possible thing to induce the conservative British and Foreign Blind Association to unite with us in a scientific code primarily made for and adapted to school children, and not for adults and bible readers only, of course the consummation would have been better for the English-speaking Blind.”

Whilst we cannot but regret the fact that the committee here mentioned omitted to approach the British and Foreign Blind Association on the subject, we fear they had only too good reasons for their surmises as to the futility of such a proceeding, our own experience in 1893 exactly bearing out what they anticipated, as you will hear later.

We thus see to what a serious extent personal prejudices and conflicting opinions have been to blame for retarding the progress of education in that particular direction in which we are all peculiarly interested; and it is to me a matter of wonder that the Blind—for there must have been some wealthy and influential ones amongst them—submitted for such a prolonged period to the absurd domination of the Seeing in such matters.

More than half a century elapsed before the type which has proved itself—at least I think it has—to be the very best educational medium for the Blind, was accepted as such by the most enlightened nations in the world. Since 1878, the Braille system, so far as we are concerned, has undergone no generally accepted practical changes, or improvements, and up till the present those responsible for its introduction and early propagation in this country have steadily refused to admit into their literature new signs and modifications which were obviously advantageous and in strictly good taste, and which those patriotic and enthusiastic pioneers of modernised Braille—I mean the worthy Editors of “*Santa Lucia*”—first used in their most delightful and deservedly popular magazine. And here if I may be allowed to digress for an instant, I would like to place on record my deep sense of gratitude for the invaluable aid which they so magnanimously gave me when I introduced Braille printing at the Royal Blind Asylum and School, West Craigmillar, and for the genial and friendly spirit which they have at all times manifested towards me and my work. I venture to think that among the many bene-

factors of the Blind in this country, there are none whose names are held in higher estimation than the names of the sisters Hodgkin.

Now, however, the British and Foreign Blind Association are making a praiseworthy effort to make up for lost time, and have elaborated a system which may, I hope, in the hands of providence, go far to assist in hastening on the day when "Uniform Braille system" shall be no more a myth, but an accomplished fact. To this end they invite criticism of their "Recommendations," and as a true friend reproves as well as praises, I think I cannot do better, keeping in view my desire in this paper to aid in the acquiring of a uniform Braille system—than to suggest by means of a few criticisms passed thereon by myself, the lines which those who have been favoured with a copy of the British and Foreign Blind Association's special Committee's "Recommendations" may profitably follow when they proceed to the consideration thereof.

My first word is one of congratulation and praise. I think I should be lacking in gratitude indeed if I did not recognise and appreciate, and call for the united thanks and congratulations of all interested in Braille and the Blind, for such an exhaustive work as they have prepared, and for the immense amount of time, patience, and careful thought which the select Committee—and perhaps at the risk of appearing invidious I may single out specially Miss Douglas-Hamilton—must have devoted to their labour of love in order to produce so complete and elaborate a scheme of "Recommendations."

They have practically "ploughed the field," and if the ploughing is followed by a wisely directed harrowing and sowing and tending and weeding, there is no doubt that with the smile of heaven upon it, the harvest will follow: and I believe it will be a harvest of uniform grain—but it will take time—it will take time.

Now to proceed; I will simply deal with Grade II., as Grade III. is, in the meantime, beyond me.

In considering the question of a Uniform Braille system, we must first of all decide whether such system shall, in its construction and application, dominate or be dominated by, the beautiful, powerful, historic and world-wide language of which it is to be the written exponent. I say it is essential that this must be the first question to be decided, as on such decision our attitude towards contractions and abbreviations must rest.

Are the beauties of the English language to be sacrificed to that indefinite thing called "space"? Is the historical etymology of the greatest language in the world to be bartered for a few dots per page, or a few pages per volume of raised type? Is every claim of good orthography to be waived, and correct

spelling to be made almost impossible to the blind child in order to satisfy the cravings of those who are slaves to the morbid habit of what, if I may coin a word, I would term "contractionism." ?

Are we to answer these questions in the affirmative? then, I fear, the ostensible conclusion must be, that blind readers are deficient in those poetic instincts which enable one to enjoy the beautiful in literature as in nature.

I have seen people, who profess to be passionately fond of flowers, collect what here in England you term a posey or nosegay, and tying all the stems tightly together, place the bunch of flowers in a big vase or bowl in the middle of the parlour table, and think the room is decorated: but who, with a true sense of beauty will deny, that a *few* flowers, neatly arranged in separate vessels and placed apart, are more pleasing to the poetic sense and elevating to the mind, in a word—fulfilling their mission more perfectly.

In exactly the same degree, I maintain, a book of exquisite English literature in immoderately contracted Braille—I especially refer now to words abbreviated by the omission of vowels, etc., and neglect of the rules of syllabification cannot possibly convey to the reader the sense of delight and the elevating and educative influence which it otherwise might do. If we are to have books in Braille Shorthand then let us call them Shorthand. Let us elaborate the excellent Birmingham system and utilise its boundless possibilities in a sensible direction, but do not let us massacre the finest literature in the world, and call the resulting carnage "Braille."

I can scarcely fancy even the most ardent of stenographers going into raptures over a passage from Tennyson in Pitman's Shorthand!

In the book of "Recommendations" we have a list of no less than 820 words or thereby, in the majority of which not the smallest guide is given to the correct spelling of the original word. How then are our Blind children to learn spelling? Of course it may be said that they are supposed to have learned spelling before they reach this stage, but I appeal to you all, what would become of our *own* spelling if all the literature *we* read were served up to us in this skeletonised form? nay verily, it would be a literature of dry bones!

Mental strain and discomfort are infinitely more wearisome and exhausting than bodily fatigue, therefore I say, to exchange a somewhat lengthy character and system requiring a *small* amount of mental exertion, for its direct opposite, is far from a desirable exchange.

I am free to confess that until recently I was personally in favour of considerable additions to our contraction code, but

when, a few weeks ago, I received a printed copy of the "Recommendations" of the New Contractions Committee of the British and Foreign Blind Association, a document containing twelve pages of closely printed rules and regulations necessary for the correct writing of Braille as proposed by the said Committee, my hair literally stood on end, and as, with the aid of a big lexicon, and a friendly lawyer from next door, I strove to wade through and digest all the "when thou shalt's" and "then thou shalt not's" set forth in truly legal fashion, and all the mystifying technicalities involved in the use or abuse of the "Apostrophe Capital Sign," the "Primary Initial Sign," and the "Auxiliary Sign," my dull brain swam, and I had visions of future classes of blind children in the fifth and sixth standards, grey-haired and dejected, dropping immaturely into their graves, or being carried off to the lunatic asylums, having abbreviated their lives and contracted madness in a vain attempt to cram their minds with the rules for contracting everything else. I say it without wishing to make the slightest reflection detrimental to the enthusiastic and well-intentioned Committee who have so ungrudgingly given their time and thought to the production of the "Recommendations," but still I must say, and I believe every intelligent teacher of the Blind in the country will support me when I say, if this system is to be the "Uniform System of Braille," and it alone is to be considered orthodox, and if all its complex and mystifying rules and regulations are essential to the correct writing of it, then we will have none of it; and this for the simple reason that uniformity under such conditions would be hopeless of achievement even amongst the highly educated, whilst among the average Blind the Braille chaos would be awful to contemplate.

I would suggest that these rules, elaborate and complex as they are, would have been rendered infinitely more simple and easy to understand if an example of what is meant were given in each case—that is, if such a thing were possible.

You will pardon me if I quote from page 4, par. 9 of the "Recommendations" in support of my last remarks. "Grade II., or the moderately contracted Grade. . . . "Braille in this Grade shall be printed and written subject to, and in accordance with the preceding Recommendations, except Recommendation VIII.; and further, in this Grade only the 'signs' and 'abbreviated' words contained in, or the use of which is by implication authorised by, the said First Schedule hereunder written shall be used, and, subject to the aforesaid, 'signs' or 'abbreviated' words other than those contained in, or the use of which is by implication authorised by such First Schedule shall be used, and Braille in this Grade shall be otherwise printed or written in accordance with the following thirteen sub-recommendations."

Now, I put it to the Conference, do you, ladies and gentlemen, who, as delegates, may be taken to represent the most experienced and intelligent Blind opinion in the country, do you grasp the full meaning of this heading? Who is to decide which signs are and which are not "by implication authorised?" My view of what is implied may be quite different from yours, and yours from your neighbour's, yet each has a right to his own opinion, and would doubtless act upon it when writing Braille; then, wherein comes the uniformity? I am terribly in earnest in this, and desire to again emphasise my contention that a "Uniform Braille System," to be practicable, must have simplicity itself as its primary, secondary, and auxiliary recommendations.

And whilst, as I have stated above, I quite agree that a number of additional contractions and abbreviations systematically arranged are very desirable, (in fact, a number of those included in Schedule I. were my own suggestions), I most strongly urge that the rules, if any, affecting their use shall be as few and as short as possible. To my mind it were quite sufficient to say that all signs representing letter combinations shall be used when they retain their original sound, excepting when such use would interfere with the correct syllabification of a word. I may, perhaps, make my meaning more plain by taking concrete examples. To be brief I will mention but two of the best known "of" and "the" are contractions of the third line, and are taught to infants along with the alphabet not as "o-f" and "t-h-e" but as "of" and "the." Now I maintain that these signs, by force of habit and instruction, are impressed on the mind of the child as *sounds* "of" and "the," and not as combinations or sequences of letters, and immediately the finger recognises the sign, the corresponding sound presents itself to the mind for utterance, and gives a false impression in such instances as in "Geofrey," "roof," etc., "the" in "scythe" and "breathe." In each of these latter words the final "e" is silent, and therefore the sign does not retain its original sound; and again, should you wish to write the past tense of "breathe" would you write "brea-the-d"? if so, you interfere with correct syllabification. Or would you write "brea-th-ed" if the latter, then you are inconsistent. Obviously the right way to spell all words ending in "the" is to use the contraction "th" and "e," then in case of a past tense, you simply add the final syllable "ed" to the root ending in "th." The use of the present participle makes the necessity for such a course even more striking. All difficulties of this kind would, however, be obviated by the application of some such brief and simple rule as I have indicated.

I note that on page 5, rule 6, of the "Recommendations" such restrictions are made regarding the sign "the" except where it

occurs in *compound words*. I am somewhat at a loss to understand this modification of the rule; suppose we turn the simple word "scythe" into the compound word "scythe-blade," it does not alter the fact, or remove the objection complained of. Could I be satisfied, however, that the majority of the educated reading Blind do not in practice, look upon these combinations as *sound signs* rather than *letter sequences*, I would waive my objection on that score, but would certainly, as a teacher, stand out against vandalism in syllabification.

Again if we turn to page 4, head ix., 1, 2, we find that two lower signs such as "en" and "in" may not follow each other close together. For instance, in "peninsula" they may not both be contracted, yet these contractions are allowed if one space intervene, as in the case of "the *pen in his* hand" where we have three lower signs allowed. Now why should this be? Surely if such rule is in the interests of simplicity and to prevent difficulty of ascertaining whether the said signs are in the upper or lower cells, and I can think of no other reason, it were much easier to discern this when the characters are close together and in proximity to full length characters, or letters, or signs than when further apart. The same remark applies to the first rule on page 5, and I would suggest that these two sub-rules be eliminated.

Further, I am much pleased to find that by rule 10 on page 6 two or more word signs such as "and, for, of, the, with," shall, where the sense permits, be used in succession to each other, and I sincerely hope the verdict of the country will be unanimous on this point.

I am strongly opposed to the use of the apostrophe instead of the period after initials to names or contracted words, such as Col., Capt., Dr., Rev., etc., and I believe my objection is shared by most of those who, like myself, are teachers of Braille, and by the majority of Braille readers.

Just a few references to Schedule I. of the "Recommendations" to conclude my criticisms. I ask you to go no further than page 1 of it. Will not "dot 2 b" (better) be confounded with "d," and "dot 4 b" (brother) with "j"? Does not "2, 4 b" (blood) resemble "g," and "2, 4, 6 a" make a good "p"? I would suggest that in order to carry out successfully the excellent system of classification adopted in this schedule, in the case of all combinations of what are called front dots (2 4 6) with the letters "a, b, k and l," the old rule of writing these letters in the front holes be adhered to, making a wider space and preventing ambiguity; or perhaps better still, drop the combination with these four letters altogether.

With most of the other contractions proposed for Grade II. I cordially agree, except in the cases of (on page 4) "bringing"

which is like "ou," and "brought" which is the counterpart of "of." To abbreviated words, except in a very limited degree, I am, as a teacher, conscientiously opposed on the ground of spelling. "Lower b-g-t-n" (for begotten) suggests only one "t" in the word, and such a thing as "dots 2, 4, er" for "erroneous" is, to my mind, monstrous. These are two specimens taken at random, but they serve my purpose.

That there was a real desire on the part of the educated and reading Blind of the country for some improvement of the then existing Braille system, was clearly evidenced early in 1893. In January of that year the first number of *Hora Jucunda* was published, with its correspondence column, in which, for the first time in the history of the world, I suppose, the Blind had the opportunity of giving public expression to their opinions in an embossed journal. This privilege was quickly taken advantage of, and the very first letter to the editor was one on the vexed question of Braille inconsistency. My correspondents, some of them scholars of no mean order, expressed their dissatisfaction in plain terms, and the rules of the British and Foreign Blind Association came in for a good deal of adverse criticism; as well as its autocratic method of controlling Braille.

I suggested a Union or Association for the consideration of the subject; the idea became so popular that what was termed the "Hora Jucunda" Union was started with the primary object of obtaining, if possible, "Uniformity of Braille System."

Branches of the Union were speedily formed in various English and Scottish centres, and things promised well for a successful issue. Braille, as at present written, and the rules relating thereto, were to be reviewed, discussed and voted upon, as were all suggestions for improvements or alterations, and a majority of two-thirds was necessary to warrant a recommendation to change the existing code.

For reasons of their own, the British and Foreign Blind Association, although we sent a special invitation to them, declined to unite with us, stating that they reserved to themselves the right to make alterations in the Braille system.

Realising the folly of proceeding with such a powerful and well-subsidised opponent in the field, and that under such circumstances uniformity was impossible, on the advice of the late Mr. Buckle, we decided to leave the matter in abeyance. His words to me were, "You have set the wheels in motion, let them grind slowly, the result is certain to follow, and I hope the day is not far distant when the desired goal may be reached, and a 'Uniform Braille System' be an accomplished fact."

In order to do this, all those who take in hand to assist in the great work must, as I said before, sink their personal or party feeling, and be willing to act with a single eye in the

interests of that community who have so long been the victims of the fads, fancies, and stupid jealousies of individuals and autocratic coteries.

Now, a word as to the use of capital letters in Braille. In reply to the circular letter which I recently sent out to educators of the Blind, and others in this country, in regard to this and other interesting questions, I received fifty replies. Of these 27 voted for capitals in *all* embossed literature, 32 in school books, 5 were indifferent, and 13 would have no capitals at all.

For my own part, I hold that capitals are as necessary for the Blind as for the seeing. Without them literature loses a great deal of its character and force; and without them embossed books are not an adequate transcript of ordinary books. Probably if we who see had never been educated to use capitals we should never have felt the need of them, but who shall say that they do not give style, character and distinctness to what we read.

If ladies, for instance, had never been used to the wearing of hats and bonnets. they would have thought such things absolutely unnecessary; but I fear the majority of them are of a different way of thinking as things are, and I am bound to admit, though they—like Braille capitals—take up a great deal of space, there is a good deal to be said for them on the score of style and character.

Most blind children now are taught to use the typewriter! How are they to acquire a correct and adequate knowledge as to placing capitals if they do not find them in their own books and magazines? The School for the Blind, which holds the foremost position as such in the world, under the most eminent teacher of the Blind in the world, himself blind—need I say to whom I refer? my dear friend, Dr. F. J. Campbell—believes in the use of capitals in Braille, and that after years of patient thought and experiment. Therefore, had I not been satisfied in my own mind as to the advisability of using them, such evidence as this would have convinced me.

My concluding remarks I devote to suggesting what are, in my opinion, practical lines of action for the accomplishment of the great end we have in view. These suggestions have been made to me by two eminent Principals of Blind Schools.

1.—The establishment of a National Council, all whose members should be able to read and write fully contracted Braille, and be drawn from various parts of the country, also corresponding members in the Colonies.

2.—The education of the Blind being now under the Board of Education, *they* should be the authority for issuing a universal system. This would be an authority which would have weight, and which would have power to issue instructions which no

Society would be in a position to do. They would obtain the opinions of experts and good Braillists, focussing the opinions, and from them collaborate a system which would be made a universal and authorised one.

The former, you will note, is practically what the "Hora Jucunda" Union was intended to be, and I have not the slightest doubt it would have been successful nine years ago, and that by now we should have had a "Uniform Braille System" in use, could we have secured concerted action; but "It's never too late to mend," and that this Conference may be the means of leading all those taking part in it to give their support to some such measure is my earnest hope. Is it not advisable that the Conference should appoint a Committee—a representative Committee—to go into the whole question, and report, through the Braille magazines, and by circular to the heads of Institutions, their finding? The question is a momentous one—not to be discussed and dismissed in twenty minutes, but necessitating the calm and deliberate consideration of weeks and months. Let us all, therefore, forget ourselves and our own little schemes, fads and prejudices, and throw ourselves heart and soul into the great work to which our Heavenly Father has called us.

MR. WILSON:

Copies of the recommendations of the New Contractions Committee are here, and anybody can have a copy who wishes.

MR. W. H. DIXSON, (Oxford.):

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen. Speaking as I wish to do on all the Papers which we have had this afternoon, my remarks must necessarily be of a somewhat discursive nature. I understood that the first paper which we were to have this afternoon was upon the need of cheaper literature in Braille. As a matter of fact, instead of being a paper on that subject it was one on the *possession* of cheap literature in Braille. Whether this need exists is of course quite another matter, (but I think it will be generally agreed that it does) especially with regard to volumes which can be easily got at; for it is quite evident that with the exception of books which are in great demand, and which therefore can be printed more cheaply, there is a considerable amount of difficulty. Some proper means should exist of getting at books which are literarily valuable, but which could not be printed in large quantities, and therefore I would like to say a word about Libraries. There is in this country a magnificent library for the Blind at 114, Belsize Road, and therefore, I would like to make this suggestion, that in the towns, people should establish Committees and make arrangements to work with the central library in London, rather than forming local libraries, and my reason for this suggestion is that I do not consider it possible that any local library can ever exist which shall be in

the same position as the central library at Belsize Road, with its vast quantity of books, and its capacity for varying its subscriptions according to the position of its subscribers. And therefore each centre would have, not only its Committee for dealing with the central library, but its Sub-committee of ladies and others who would write out books for the central library. I know of course, that a good deal of that kind of thing is being done already, I am not suggesting it with the idea that it has never been done, but I think it is a pity that it is not done more, instead of having local libraries.

In the second place, I should like to make a few remarks upon Miss Moon's very interesting paper. It would be of interest to know what percentage of the adult blind fail to be able to learn the Braille characters, because of course, it is granted by us all that Moon is the easiest system for the Blind to learn. Dr. Moon conferred a great blessing on the Blind, and a blessing which the centuries will never forget, but at the same time that benefit, I think, may be said rather to have been conferred upon the older than the younger blind. I should like to know, therefore, what percentage of the adult blind cannot learn Braille. We have a library at Oxford, and I may say it is not a local library in the sense of other local libraries, it is "par excellence" a students' library, and I do not think there is another students' library in this country. Of course it is nothing like so large as the Belsize Road library, as it works on different lines. We do not use the Moon System at Oxford at all, nor do I think it is used very much in the Oxford Home Teaching Society. I see the modern Home Teaching Societies use the Moon system a great deal less than they used to, but I would suggest one thing with regard to the Moon System, and this time-honoured and good old controversy about contractions, and it is that the letters G J L and C should be used for different words than those for which they have been accustomed to be used in the past. I remember reading a little while ago the exposition of a system of shorthand, in which this somewhat ironical remark was made, "The letters C J L and G will no longer be used for the Sacred Names, as they do not frequently occur in business." I rather mean that I do not think those letters should be used for those words except in the Bible and books of devotion, and then I think they should be exclusively used. I therefore suggest that in future works of the Moon Type those four letters should be used exclusively for those purposes.

With regard to a Uniform Braille System, I think it cannot be doubted that such a thing is wanted, but I do not think that any movement in favour of a united Braille system can come from any *Institution*; I do not say this from any feeling I may have towards any particular Institution, but an Institution is apt

to fall under the suspicion, generally groundless, of being an interested body, and therefore any movement made from any particular Blind Institution, however good that movement may be, in favour of something which is to be adopted by the Blind of the whole nation, must necessarily seem to bear an interested complexion. Therefore, though I should like to see such a Council as Mr. Illingworth has suggested, I think that that Council must emanate from individuals who do not belong to what I might call an interested organization. I regret that I have not seen the pamphlet which the British and Foreign Blind Association has issued. In criticising the Association we must remember that a Corporation is always the same, but the individual is not always the same. We learn sometimes that a Corporation never dies, but the individual does die, and when he ceases to act, others will come into his place.

MR. MAIN (Birmingham Institution):

My lord, it seems to me that there can hardly be two opinions with regard to the desirability of having an universal system of Braille, but at the same time I should very much regret that system being frequently tampered with, or that such a radical change should take place as that proposed by the British and Foreign Blind Association. I think that such a change is quite unnecessary, and would be most injurious. Unnecessary inasmuch as we have now a splendid system, working capitally, a system which can be read fluently and easily written. We have boys in our school who can read just as well from the Braille as sighted persons from ordinary type. Such a change would be injurious, inasmuch as it would render any newly printed literature practically useless to those who have already passed through the schools. It would also prove very detrimental to the spelling, which under the most favourable circumstances is difficult for the Blind. Under these circumstances I do not see why the Blind should be so burdened as they would be if that change were to take place, and it seems to me that all the arguments which may be brought to bear in favour of such a change may also be used with regard to sighted reading. What a saving of ink, what a saving of paper, if our books and periodicals and newspapers were printed in accordance with this system! I can easily imagine the consternation which would ensue if there went forth, one morning, the decree from the Board of Education that henceforth all elementary school books would be printed in this fashion. And I can as easily picture the annoyance which would be depicted on the faces of gentlemen present if they were to find, some morning, their daily newspapers printed in the same way. My lord, I for one shall be very glad indeed if the recommendations of the Association are very much shortened. I should like to see the 50 or 60 pages of their

pamphlet either reduced to a maximum of say half-a-dozen, or the whole thing relegated to the waste-paper basket.

MR. LITTLEWOOD (Liverpool School):

My Lord, there are three papers, each of which I should like to say something about, and I am rather afraid I shall find I have left out the parts I most desired to speak on. I should like to thank Miss Moon and Mr. Illingworth for their very excellent papers. I must say that Mr. Illingworth's was rather different from what I had expected from him.

Now, in the first place, there is the question of cheaper literature and more of it. Of course we are all agreed that such a thing is necessary. We in Liverpool possess a library of some 400 volumes, and that library of 400 volumes has cost £300. Evidently then the up-to-date books which are available for the Blind are only for the few, and not for private ownership. Now, the Moon System has served a very good purpose, it is serving a good purpose to a certain extent now, but I think that the money which is spent on it could be better spent otherwise. I have had adult blind men and women who said they could not learn Braille. The dots that are used ordinarily in Braille a man of from 30 to 40 will find very great difficulty in learning. Now, I was determined that the persons should learn, and to overcome that difficulty I had a small frame made with dots twice the size of the ordinary Braille, and I wrote the alphabet and short extracts on this frame. I have never yet met a man or woman who could not learn it after a little practice with the large dots. It was then a very easy step to go to the small dots. So that in the literature I think we can get Braille for all people and all conditions. The only difference would be to print in larger type for those who are hard handed, and smaller type for the more sensitive. Looking at it from a commercial point of view, if we spend money for one system only (Miss Moon is asking for a fund for Moon) I think the British and Foreign Blind Association would also be open to receive donations for Braille. Now if these two funds could be used as one, and the books printed, I think the difficulty of more and cheaper literature would be solved. We should also have one system where we now have two. We know in America grants are made by the various States, and they are not agreed on their systems. There is one other system which has not been mentioned—where the dots are turned the other way. [A Voice: The New York Point System.] Now, the complaint in America is that these grants for literature are only available for a certain class, and others are debarred from using them. We are likely to have the same complaint here if we are not very careful, and as the British and Foreign Bible Society are re-issuing the Bible, we ought to have an expression of what we consider the most suitable system. One

speaker said that those connected with Institutions should not have a voice in the Braille, because they are interested. In my opinion they should be consulted, simply because they are interested. I think there is no one connected with an Institution in the United Kingdom who would care to press any system for their own glorification. I think there is not much self-glorification in it. Anyone interested in the Blind will know that what is done, is done quietly, and for the benefit of the Blind solely. Another reason is, that those who teach Braille to young children must have an educational system—we have that in the present Braille system. The only fault I find with the present Braille is that it does not go far enough. It is logical and scientific, which the American Braille cannot claim to be. For those who do not know the details of the Braille, I would like to say that the first ten letters are made up solely of one or other of four dots. The second ten are exactly the same with one of the other dots added, and the remainder with both the other dots added. Now, I hold that that is scientific, logical and educational, and should not be tampered with. I have had some years' experience in teaching it, and it is my personal opinion as the result of it.

In our present system of Braille we are already labouring under difficulties. Mr. St. Clare Hill is in the room, and he is the Official Examiner for Braille. Now, the British and Foreign Blind Association recommend certain contractions, Miss Hornby introduces other contractions, and our friend Mr. Illingworth has some contractions of his own. The children have the alternative of three different systems of contractions, but when His Majesty's Inspector visits the school, and sends the papers to Mr. St. Clare Hill, I should like to know which of those three systems Mr. Hill uses in judging how the Braille is taught at Liverpool. I think others are in the same position, and we should like to know definitely.

One other point—on the libraries; there was one very good library mentioned. During the Easter holidays I was speaking to a blind person who was interested in the library. He told me the fee had been a guinea, and he had with difficulty been able to raise the guinea; now he says it is three guineas, and he asked me if I knew the reason. We do not know why they should be charging three guineas instead of one. The Blind find three guineas rather too much to raise.

As regards the present system issued by the British and Foreign Blind Association, I agree with the previous speakers that we should set our faces dead against it. It will load the memory, and that is all it will do. There is no training, and it is simply a collection of arbitrary contractions. To give an example, if you will write out "J S H U H M" as one word

written together (which they are expected to read quickly and fluently), it means "Jesus saith unto him." It has absolutely no meaning to us. The system is full of such words, which will at any rate destroy the reading with that fluency which the present Braille allows.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Edinburgh School):

I would like to state that, in printing School books and general literature, we use at the Edinburgh Asylum none but the contractions authorised by the British and Foreign Blind Association. Only in my own monthly magazine we have five or six special signs for special words. In other cases we use those authorised by the Association.

DR. CAMPBELL (Norwood College):

Mr. Chairman, the suggestion with regard to larger Braille dots for the hard-handed, adult Blind, is a good one when they begin to learn to read. In the first instance we use an alphabet embossed on a zinc plate. We have a skeleton frame, and by placing large-sized pins in the cells, we are able to form all the Braille letters; this plan enables anyone in a short time to understand the number and position of the dots. After using the frame and zinc plate, an alphabet on cardboard is useful; as the touch improves, we reduce the size until they are able to read ordinary Braille.

In preparing examination papers, we have given up the use of Braille. The inspectors cannot read it, and they are obliged to get someone to translate it. All the children are taught typewriting as soon as they have learned to read and write Braille, and the typewritten papers are thoroughly satisfactory. When the inspector was leaving, last year, he said he should be glad if training colleges for the sighted would use typewriters.

In regard to cheaper literature the first step should be to do away with the multiplicity of systems, and have one international system for the whole Anglo-speaking world. Dr. Armitage and I worked upon it together, and twice I went to the National Conference of Superintendents in the United States and tried to get them to unite and form an Anglo-American Committee, so that we could adopt one common system. On principle I learn to read all the different systems of embossed printing. I have valuable books in New York Point and American Braille, and these systems have adopted some principles which are fundamental. The recurrence of the letters should be recognised in the arrangement of the alphabet. For instance, E, T, A, I, O, N, S, H, and R, constitute between 70% and 80% of the English language, and therefore should be represented by the simplest characters. I am strongly in favour of making a great effort to get an Anglo-American system; let us include the Blind of Australia, Canada, and all the Colonies, in a word, all the

English-speaking world. Let us have a Committee of people qualified for the purpose, and, if possible, get an arrangement which will be universally accepted. The great difficulty will be with those Institutions which use New York Point, but if we are ready to consider all the best features in that system as well as others, let us hope they will meet us. I have given much time and thought to forming an alphabet according to the recurrence of the letters; the principle is correct, and when an alphabet is arranged in the best possible way on this system, it will offer great advantages. If any of you wish to test either the New York Point or American Braille, I shall be pleased to lend the books. I thoroughly endorse all that Mr. Illingworth says about the new contractions. They have not been adopted by the Association, but have been sent out by the Sub-Committee for comments, and when they are returned, I hope I may have the pleasure of burning them.

REV. W. H. MURRAY (from China):

This highly flattering opportunity comes alas at a time when I am so little capable of taking advantage of it. My health has been so broken down that I cannot express my mind as I would. Still by the kindness of God it is less necessary, because it is so well recognised and fully illustrated, that you can do with less words on the present occasion. About 27 years ago I was a Bible Missionary illustrating the glories of our Divine Revelation when another glory sprung up. Three most interesting blind men came, and I saw them in tears, and after hearing some of the blessings our Divine Redeemer had granted to other Blind, they went away greatly comforted. I lent one of them a book, after he had asked me, but I was puzzled as to what use it would be to him. He was grateful. Still my trouble was—how can you understand this book, it is only for sighted readers. “Ah” he said, “I have a friend who will have patience and read it to me.” At the same moment I found a burning getting up in my bones. I thought how our Blind had many advantages they have not; how they can read and write, and help others. I told him that, but it was like throwing a bucket of cold water upon him. He thought I was departing from the truth, and that it was a sheer impossibility. This only increased the burning more, and I began to go round, spreading the cause of the Blind amongst the Missionaries, hoping that someone would have the inspiration and take it up, but I got on with the object worse and worse, and last of all, when I was taking my siesta till the great heat of the summer sun would pass, a flash of light came and in an instant of time I saw this whole plan that I have adopted, and have continued without the slightest alteration ever since; and it is growing, increasing and getting into favour among the Missions, and when calamity came upon us all, it seemed as if it was an

accomplished fact that all the struggles and yearnings were bearing fruit. I was at peace, and I was praising God for the glorious result. With two or three exceptions, all the pupils that I had were sent expressly to be taught on these plans. These Blind are to become day school teachers to the sighted. See what God has done! I began with great torture of mind, but I began on such a principle that I did not quite see it myself, although I was a teacher, until I found that a blind man, and not a very smart one, was actually reading in this wonderful form. It was simply this, that I had previously employed a wonderful system of phonetics, spelled the language of China phonetically, but now this new system was the perfect opposite of this. It was an arbitrary form, but it was to take the language up in syllables. It only numbers 400 sounds, and we put these 400 sounds into four pages, ten lines to a page, and each line having ten sounds. This serves the blessed object for the blind primer. That is the plan, and you in England may talk about the difficulties of contractions here; we have not one single contraction in all our written language, we never exceed two letters per word; with these two letters we describe the sound and the tone of any word of the language. One word you can describe by a certain tone. We have four tones, and our written language is one deep letter and one small. The one side for small letters either high or low, and the other side for the deep letter, not only expresses the sound thus, but which one of the four tones the word belongs to. The whole sound expressed and the whole tonal system expressed by two letters.

The school went on growing and increasing in great numbers, and we had fine musicians among these blind people, and splendid readers and writers. They can write 48 words per minute, they can read quicker than people usually read with their eyes, the one hand just relieves the other at the end of the line and takes the next line. It is so beautiful to see them read, and it is not tiresome to the ear to hear them. They read so fluently, and intonate every word so beautifully, and according to the rhyme. They make sublime Scripture Readers, the native preacher at the Street Chapels can sit down, and the people who do not usually like to listen to Idiograph read Chinese. It is slow, it is wearisome; but this blind boy can read so perfectly that it is a pleasure to listen, and so it answers the purpose very well. But as I said, Missionaries came and said "But what about industries?" "What industries?" Any number of industries of every kind known would not be enough for such a vast country. The industry for one part would not suit another, therefore I gave up all idea of industries. Yet some universal industry was wanted for the blind, and I thought the most simple way was—outline the point letters of the Braille—and what have you? Why the

simplest letters in creation ! Query—Then why cannot you have the very identical page for the sighted as the Blind use ? Why then can not the blind be composers and book makers, and also teachers ? Because only five per cent. of the Chinese men can read, and one in every thousand of the women, therefore every Mission Station has been crowded with illiterate people. This question of being able to be day school teachers to the illiterate is a universal call and industry. Some of those people who were massacred were sent specially from these Missions to be taught to be School Teachers and Bible Readers, as well as Typewriters. How easily the blind men can become almost reporters by the Typewriters ! We have Hammond Typewriters, and these have been adapted to our system. We can make out a letter and set a blind boy to write an answer. In these schools they can correspond with the converts taught, and thus multiply the Missionary's effectiveness manifold. A boy can do it easily. He can dash it off with great ease, as if he were making fun. But my time is expired ; however this plan has been fully gone into and is identical with Miss Gordon-Cumming's illustrations which you can purchase, and in which you will find more fully what I have described.

MR. WILLIAM MEAD, (Superintendent of the Indigent Blind Visiting Society, London.):

Mr. Chairman, I have spent 40 years of my life in connection with work amongst the Blind in London, and during the whole of that time, I have been occupied in pioneer work,—the first six years in connection with the Home Teaching Society, and the last 34 years in connection with the Indigent Blind Visiting Society. Hence, I claim to have some knowledge of the difficulties as well as the advantages possessed by the Blind with regard to Braille. I became acquainted with the system in 1861, being taught by the late Mr. Daniel Conolly. While connected with the Home Teaching Society, I was compelled to confine my energies on behalf of the Society to the one system, Moon's ; I devoted my spare time however, to making myself acquainted with other systems. So I became familiar with Lucas, and the Phonetic System introduced by the late Mr. Frere. It was incumbent on me during those six years to teach nothing but Moon ; I was glad to have the opportunity of teaching Moon in many cases, but I soon felt a strong desire for a more comprehensive and less voluminous system. My first pupil was 74 years of age, and she took the system very readily. Personally I have a strong feeling in favour of a "Line" character. It has been said by some speakers to-day (I notice by sighted speakers too) that dots are more easily felt than Moon's type, or anyhow quite as easily. I differ ; my feeling is that a "line" character is much better felt, and therefore more easily read by an aged or hard-

handed person than a number of dots can be. But I felt that there were intelligent blind people with whom I came in contact who could read something more complex than Moon's Type. I became acquainted with the late Dr. Armitage; and the result of that acquaintance was that I transferred my services to the Indigent Blind Visiting Society, which opened up classes for the Blind in all parts of London. To begin with, I was put under the necessity of using only the Phonetic System. This I felt to be an injustice to me; having a knowledge of Lucas', and other systems then in use, I did not consent to confine my reading either for personal purposes, and in the homes of the people, to the Phonetic system. In the classes, however, I was compelled to use it exclusively for some years, and at length it became intolerable to me. I had become convinced that there were blind people attending our classes who never could acquire a knowledge of the Phonetic system. I strongly urged upon the Committee of the Indigent Blind Visiting Society to allow me to introduce another system, viz., Moon's. Permission was granted, and I soon made some readers. Many of those who learned to read by the use of Moon, would, I am satisfied, have gone on to the end of their days without acquiring a working knowledge of the Phonetic system. Education has been much impeded by advocating one system to the exclusion of others. Then Dr. Armitage visited France, and made the acquaintance of Braille, although Braille was in this country before Dr. Armitage knew of it. I became acquainted with it in 1861, and when Dr. Armitage mentioned the matter to me, I was able to say I knew the system and could give him some help in introducing it among the Blind. Shortly afterwards, the British and Foreign Blind Association was formed, and I had the privilege of being with Dr. Armitage in advancing that system in this country. In connection with literature for the Blind, we are much indebted to various parties who have done their best, but I should be very sorry to be bound to any particular method. I am glad that Moon exists; but I should be sorry to see it very much extended, as the Plates must be produced at great cost, and by seeing labour. The mode of production is a consideration, and until we can show that Moon is actually needed, in the way that Miss Moon has described, I think we ought first to be sure that the persons we have in mind cannot learn Braille. Braille should stand pre-eminent, but Moon can follow in its train for those who cannot achieve a knowledge of Braille. Moreover, I have always felt this—that even Braille in its present form is not sufficient to meet the wants of the most intelligent Blind. There has always been a need for a larger number of contractions, and those ladies and gentlemen who have spoken of “burdening the memory” must remember that the fingers must have consideration, and to me it is a relief

to have a few additional contractions. My only trouble is that I must not adopt them permanently, in consequence of the unsettled state in which we find ourselves in relation to systems for the Blind.

I heartily endorse the opinion of those who say "Let us have a fuller discussion of this subject." Do not let us cast anything like scorn upon that which has been recently brought forth by the British and Foreign Blind Association. Rather let us consider for ourselves; let us have an opportunity of coming together on this particular subject of types for the Blind, and I believe we shall arrive at a happy and safe issue.

REV. ARTHUR TAYLOR (Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society):

Mr. Chairman, I am very glad of this opportunity of representing the British and Foreign Bible Society at this Conference, and am grateful to the Committee of The Gardner's Trust for granting us this privilege. The reason we were anxious to be represented is that we have decided to produce Scriptures for the Blind, not only here at home, but, as far as possible, in every language abroad. This is a very large programme, but we are embarking upon it with expedition and vigour, and we should like to have the assistance and the criticism, favourable or otherwise, of everyone interested in the subject. You have heard already in the first paper to-day a criticism of the Braille books we are at present publishing in the English language, and I am very thankful that we had decided to reform our ways before that paper was written. We did not prepare the plates ourselves, they were prepared for us, and we are not going to speak ill of them, considering the good work they have done in the past, and are still doing to-day. We should like, however, to see them brought into a more perfect condition. Our Committee will do all they can to produce a new edition of the Braille Bible, if only those who are experts will come to a decision on the subject. Before I came here I took a more hopeful view of the question than I have now; I hardly realised how complicated it had become. We had not thought of altering, or even raising the question of altering, the Braille System in English, contenting ourselves with a scientific scheme for Oriental languages. But now I find that experts are not decided in their own minds that they are happy with what they have got at home. We want someone to take this matter up in a very decided and practical way, and I came this afternoon to ask this Conference, knowing that they had decided not to have resolutions, to at least come to some decision of a practical kind on this question. Can we not approach it at once? Someone has suggested that we should refer the matter to the Education Office; but we want to decide it quickly, and we cannot hope much from that quarter. I do

not know whether we at the Bible House, who represent the most neutral ground in London, can in any way assist to solve this problem by providing a place where the experts may meet without quarrelling. If I venture a personal criticism upon the book on Contractions, let me speak in its favour. I know nothing about the subject; but any book which provoked such vigorous opposition must have a great deal of good in it, and I sincerely trust that those who have taken it seriously, one way or the other, will not be content with letting the matter drop. I would like again to reiterate that we want this question settled, and we want everyone to approach it in a kind, gentle, self-denying spirit, and if we at the Bible House can do anything towards the settlement, you may rely upon us to do our full share.

DR. RANGER (British and Foreign Blind Association):

My Lord, in view of what we have heard from the two able papers by Miss Moon and Mr. Illingworth, and in view of the Provisional Recommendations of the New Contractions Committee appointed by the Executive Committee of the British and Foreign Blind Association, in the preparation of which I have been privileged to take a share, I think we shall all be agreed that this subject of Uniform Braille is one of very great importance. Further, I think we shall all agree that we have arrived at a most important stage—at a sort of crisis in the matter—at a point at which our serious attention is imperatively demanded—an attention which is not only serious but which is close, continuous, grave and respectful—in a word, the very reverse of the attention given this afternoon to the Recommendations of the New Contractions Committee.

Since I am personally identified with those Provisional Recommendations I will deal with our subject in connection with them particularly.

What was the state of things when those recommendations first appeared a few weeks ago? For the past twenty years or more there had been on the one hand an almost universal cry among the more intelligent of the Blind for further and better contractions, whilst on the other hand throughout those long years there had been an absolute absence of any serious effort, to supply a want that was general and that was so increasingly insisted on.

In this state of things the New Contractions Committee set to work. The work has been of a very varied and exceptional character, requiring the closest and most sustained attention. Some of the recommendations and sub-recommendations have been drafted as many as 20 times, thousands of words have been considered, concordances have been consulted, and suggestions have been tested again and again.

Now, how have these recommendations been received this afternoon—respectfully and seriously? Not in the least. Contempt and scorn, rejection and repudiation much more accurately describe their reception. But let me deal with our critics individually.

Mr. Illingworth's attitude towards our recommendations is one of contempt. He has evidently given them very scant attention, for he does not recognise that grade 2 is very largely what he and his pupils are writing every day. I understood him to say that grade 2 does violence to syllabification and pronunciation. He has either never got so far as sub-recommendation 5 of recommendation 9, or has entirely forgotten it, for that recommendation specifically prohibits neglect of either. Mr. Illingworth raised a cheap laugh over the phraseology of recommendation 9, but Mr. Illingworth ought to know that no clause covering an exceptional set of circumstances such as that which this recommendation has in view can be worded with great simplicity, that is, if it is to be precise and incapable of misconstruction. If Mr. Illingworth will try his hand at re-drafting that recommendation he will realise more clearly than he does at present the difficulty of the task, and will, I think, after a few hours spent in the effort, be disposed to be more respectful to the effort we have made.

Then as to grade 3, Mr. Illingworth says frankly he has not the necessary intelligence to understand it. Well, he has evidently paid so little attention to grade 2 that I am not surprised grade 3 baffles him. It was my Committee's duty to provide these recommendations. The provision of the requisite intelligence to understand them was no part of their duty.

As to Dr. Campbell. From him surely our recommendations will receive thoughtful and respectful attention. By no means. Dr. Campbell, to my utter surprise I confess, does not appear to have even once thoughtfully read these recommendations; and as to criticising them, he says frankly that such contempt has he for them, and so little toleration for those persons who are disposed to give them attention and criticism, that he would collect together all the criticisms and make a bonfire of them. What are we to think of this from a leader in blind affairs? Why, Mr. Chairman, it is going back to the spirit of the 16th century, to the days of Tetzal and the burning of Martin Luther's theses. Anything more impatient, intolerant, and, I must say, unworthy of Dr. Campbell himself I cannot imagine. Dr. Campbell provides no other criticism than this; therefore I have none other to reply to as far as he is concerned.

Then followed a gentleman whose name has escaped me. He indulges in a criticism equally general and equally without force as that of Dr. Campbell, his sole remark being that the

recommendations deserved to be thrown into the waste-paper basket. Well, that way of treating them would have one advantage, it would save us all from further trouble with them and from the task, which is what our critics seem to shrink from, of reading and endeavouring to understand them.

Then there was a gentleman—I have forgotten his name—who followed the lead of our other critics in condemning root and branch our unfortunate recommendations. He did, however, provide us with the single precise criticism we have had this afternoon, and for that I am grateful to him. He thought, if I understood him correctly, that if the words, "And it came to pass" were expressed as our recommendations suggest, it would be illegible. I am quite sure that our critic after, at the most, half-a dozen perusals, would be able to read the phrase with perfect comfort and fluency. However, as Chairman of the Committee, I promise him that his objection shall be carefully considered, and I express my gratitude to him for the single useful criticism upon our recommendations made this afternoon. There was one speaker, Mr. Mead, who did say that our recommendations should not be hastily cast aside as unworthy of notice, but deserved patient and careful consideration. I tender him, on behalf of my Committee, my hearty thanks for that observation.

Now, before leaving our critics, I have one general observation to make as to them, and it is this, that, while they object so strongly to these recommendations, which stand alone as the sole serious effort which has been made for an improvement in Braille during the past 20 years, they make not the least alternative suggestion. They admit the want, while they do nothing to meet it.

Let me now pass to the composition of our Committee and to the recommendations themselves. Within twenty-four hours of the present time I was informed that Dr. Campbell and his two colleagues, Miss Bell and Mr. Pearson, had resigned their seats on our Committee. As Honorary Secretary their resignations have not yet reached me. But down to that time our Committee was composed of six blind persons and one sighted. The recommendations are therefore the product of a Committee composed almost entirely of the Blind, and the majority of the members are private independent persons holding no official position in connection with any Blind Institution. The one sighted person I have referred to is Miss L. Douglas-Hamilton. This lady is a very important member of the Committee. To commence with, she is one of the very best Braillists in the country, and she has devoted herself almost day and night, literally days and weeks together, to the work of our Committee. My own part in the work has been quite subsidiary. It is Miss

Douglas-Hamilton who has really given the downright hard, ding-dong, in-and-out, hour-after-hour consideration to these recommendations.

Now let me draw attention to the fact—one speaker has been good enough to notice it—that these recommendations are provisional, that is, they have been prepared for criticism, but they are for specific and serious criticism, worthy of serious consideration, and such as is intended to help in making the recommendations as useful as possible.

There is another point. The recommendations are general propositions. As recommendation 4 provides, rules are to be prepared for the guidance of printers and writers, and these rules will throw a flood of light on their true character.

Next let me point out the nature of the work entrusted to my Committee. We were not given a free hand, that is, we were not given the 63 compositions of the Braille dots and asked to construct what we thought the best alphabet, and then the best contractions and best method generally of printing and writing in accordance with the alphabet decided on. If we had been in that position we might have made very different recommendations. But we were, so to speak, handed the English Braille alphabet and the contractions in use, and were asked to consider and to recommend the improvements that could be made with regard to them. In other words it was the English Braille alphabet as at present used that was the material we had, if possible, to improve. Our recommendations are the logical extensions and developments of the English Braille system. They are, so to speak, limited and governed throughout by the nature of English Braille itself.

The suggested division into three grades. It seems to me to provide for the needs of all classes. The most expert readers can avail themselves of Grade III, the less skilled of Grade II, the uncontracted Braille remaining for beginners and those who never seek to get beyond the elementary stage. As to Grade II, there are, I believe, only four actual alterations of the present system of expressing words and parts of words. Grade III may carry matters somewhat further than many will approve, and for those who make that objection I have nothing but respect. At the same time, I am personally of the opinion that nine-tenths of Braille readers would, with a very little practice, find grade 3 quite easy and a very great boon. The reader would travel with his fingers about 33 per cent. less distance than in ordinary Braille, and would accomplish the diminished distance with much less nervous strain.

And now a concluding word as to the future. If the use of English Braille is to be continued, I venture to confidently prophesy that these recommendations will in substance ultimately

prevail in spite of the condemnation and antagonism expressed at this conference, and which they may hereafter have to meet from those who have official authority and influence in the affairs of the Blind. But there is a higher court even than this Conference and the united voice of the official experts—the great mass of the private independent Blind, and I have no hesitation in predicting that their judgment will in the end be an entire reversal of the judgment that has been expressed here this afternoon with so much impatient intolerance and precipitate haste.

REV. J. KNOWLES (British and Foreign Bible Society):

I have been a Missionary in India for about twenty years, and on first going out my instructions were to stick to the precept that you have no right to touch a man's religion or a man's faith unless you are prepared to show him something better. And that is the attitude I would like to take with reference to the questions that are before us, both as regards the alphabet and the question of Contractions. Let me plainly say, my presence here this afternoon is accidental. I had no thought of English when I first issued the pamphlet on Oriental Braille, but along with Mr. Garthwaite, who is probably the best linguist in South India, and after a consultation with blind specialists, we drew up a Braille alphabet, which is suitable to Sanscrit and the whole range of the Oriental languages. Now, it necessarily follows that as the Sanscrit alphabet is a far more perfect one than our English alphabet, the code which serves for Sanscrit must be adapted to English. But will you kindly bear in mind that I had no thought whatever of touching English on this question. There are in the Indian Empire alone over 600,000 blind people. There are thousands more scattered up and down the East. There are blind there who are deprived of many other things besides sight. There are none to show them the Light of Life, or to instruct their dark minds. We hope to get from all those who are acquainted with the Braille System criticisms of the pamphlet on "Oriental Braille," and I ask that, both with reference to the pamphlet and with reference to the question of Contractions, you will not decide in a hurry, but give the whole thing your most careful consideration, and if you can give the British and Foreign Bible Society, who have very kindly taken this question in hand, aid in prevailing upon people to remember also the Eastern Blind, your interest will be regarded with gratitude. Mr. Murray has aroused interest in the Blind in China. Years ago I had the pleasure of hearing about his work there. I hope now to do for the Indian Empire what he has done for the Empire of China. With reference to this question of Contractions in English, let the suggestions be carefully considered. Let everyone go through the list of contractions one by one, and say how much or how little they want. Then

perhaps the Committee of the British and Foreign Blind Association would have a consensus of opinion definitely stated, because after all you want to know how many contractions you are to use, and the only way I see of arriving at that is to have detailed results, and to go through all the amount of work which that must entail. I, fortunately, am not blind, but my sympathies have been for many years with the Blind in India, and I am now with the British and Foreign Bible Society, hoping to help them.

Our friend Mr. Marston is not here this evening, but I should like to know in what manner he proposes to print the original shapes of the letters. If he had to do this for India he would be obliged to have 6,000 or 7,000 types, and I think even his patience would have failed at that; but I am hoping by means of a Braille Code to make it possible for the Blind in India to learn to read in their native tongue, in from one-eighth to one-sixth part of the time that it takes those who can see. We have taught it even in an afternoon, so you will see what possibilities are opening out.

The suggestion has been made to introduce the American System. I hope that rather than bring in American Braille we shall re-consider the whole question of the best use of the Braille signs in connection with the English tongue.

THE CHAIRMAN:

The owner of the first card sent in, has said that if we should like to hear how the blind Indian boys acquire and use Indian Braille, she would tell us.

MISS SHARP:

I was not very anxious to speak, as I am not a speaker, nor am I a worker among the Blind, but my sister in India, Miss Annie Sharp, wished me to come to this Conference. She has been working for about fifteen years among the Blind at Amritsar, and teaches boys, girls, and women. She, like some others, finds that there are old women who cannot learn Braille, and for these "Moon" is used.

The boys especially are very quick in learning. Some of the boys can read English Braille, and Hindustani Braille quickly and well, and can write from her dictation in either. They are very facile at it.

My sister has been using a simple adaptation of Braille to Hindustani (the "Shireff Braille"), which she has found very useful. A number of ladies in England write for her—some in this Hindustani Braille, others in English Braille, and send it out for the use of her blind pupils—parts of the Bible, and also secular books, so they have quite a little library. It is wonderful what teaching does for these people.

MISS BELL (Norwood College):

My lord, I should very much like to say a word with regard to those recommendations. I was on the Committee and have given a good deal of careful study to them. They do not really represent the work of the whole Committee, they represent the work—and hard work—of two members principally. They were drawn up as they have been issued, and brought to us at Norwood to consider, and we were asked to pass them provisionally, so that they might be sent out before the Conference. This we felt we could not do without having studied them, and we asked that we might at least have a fortnight in which to examine them. We had the fortnight, and at the end of that time, I, for one, did not feel that I could pass them as a whole, which we were asked to do. There is a great deal that is very excellent in them, but a great deal that is very complicated. The Chairman and one or two members did not feel that we could afford the time to discuss them in detail, and so I asked that my name should not be affixed, but it has been, and I thought that that being the case I should prefer to withdraw from the Committee. I hope that the recommendations will receive your careful consideration, for they are well worth it, but they want cutting down considerably, and simplifying.

MR. DAY (Blackburn Home Teaching Society):

My lord, Mr. Illingworth said that the people who should decide this question were the Blind themselves, being the readers of the books produced. And I venture humbly to think that the only way in which the voice of the Blind in general can be heard by the Conference, is by a visitor having the audacity to say a word or two. As visitors, we go to all classes and all ages. We have some experience. Our position compels us to consider the Blind whom we visit, who are our masters, and we have to consult their convenience to a very great extent. Of course, in the first place we have amongst our readers people who have been to blind schools. Some have learned the Braille, and they, I believe, will always read the Braille, whatever work they may have to do, however hard the work, and however hard their hands may become, they will always read the Braille under two conditions, one is that their work compels them to do some writing. I find that if people who learn the Braille give up writing, they also give up reading. That is one of the conditions, viz.: that they have some writing to do; the other is that the books which they can read are brought to them, because my experience, extending over a good part of the country, is that the books piled up on the shelves of a public library are not much read. In some parts of the country the librarians will tell you that they are never asked for. Even in Liverpool, where books of all classes of literature are Brailled out at great expense, the number of people

who go for them is not what you would think it would be. So it is an absolute condition that if you want the Blind as a whole to read, the books must be taken to them. Under those two essential conditions the Braille will always be read. We have also older people to deal with. It is not a question of what the people can be taught. I am a firm believer in the Braille myself, more than any other type, but it is not a question of what you can teach, it is a question of what the people will learn. And there is a great deal in this—the easier a thing is to learn, the quicker something can be made out of it, and the Moon type will always prevail for older people. It is not a question of what can be taught, it is a question of what they will learn, and the older people who have got their fingers hard will, if they learn anything at all, only learn Moon type. To my mind it has always been a mistake to look upon the Blind as machines. The public think blind people are bound to learn to read, it is an article of faith that every blind person you come across ought to be taught to read. That is a great mistake.

MR. PINE (Nottingham Institution):

My lord, I will not take up the time of the Conference very long, as we have listened to so many speeches, but I would like to say a word upon the subject of the need of more and cheaper literature for the Blind. I do not desire to enter for one moment upon the vexed questions of types and abbreviations or uniform Braille, but will merely refer to the question of libraries. The previous speaker does not appear to attach much importance to free libraries, but I do think that their extension in the country would do much to increase the literature for the Blind, and thus be productive of much good. There are some already, but I do not see why there should not be a library for the Blind wherever there is a corporation free library, and there should not, I think, be much difficulty in establishing one. I would like to commend to the members of this conference the suggestion that in every locality where there is a corporation free library they should make a very strong effort to have a library there for the Blind. Apart from thus providing a very much greater amount of literature for the Blind throughout the country, there would then be a far larger demand for Braille and Moon books, and this, I think, would help to solve the problem of the cost of the books, for it would surely tend to cheapen them as they could be printed then in greater numbers. I do not for a moment desire to say anything which seems like an advertisement, but I think it is now nearly 20 years ago since we established a blind library in connection with our public free library at Nottingham. For a number of years I felt much distressed that we had no readable books or library at the Institution, and what was worse still, that we had no money to buy them with. These questions are nearly always

questions of £ s. d. It was mentioned several times in our annual reports how much we should like to establish a library in our Institution, but nothing came of it. Then the idea occurred to me that as that much is done for the seeing and we have libraries for them, why should we not have a few books at our public free library for the use of the Blind. I went to see our town clerk, who is a very broad-minded man, and he at once took up the suggestion, and very kindly came, with a member of the free library committee, to discuss the matter with me at the Institution, and I then explained to him all about our Braille, and our systems of teaching, and he promised to bring the matter before the free libraries committee. A few days afterwards I was asked to attend a meeting of that committee to explain my request. The committee were favourably impressed by the idea, and passed a resolution there and then (it was in the year 1883) by which a grant of the sum of £30 was made for a few shelves of books, and they requested the public librarian and me to choose the books to that amount. We thus commenced with £30 worth of Braille books, and Sir Charles Lowther made a grant of books in the Moon type. Additions have since been made, and there are now about 600 volumes. I think it is an easy suggestion, and it should not be difficult for anyone to influence their corporation free library authorities to start a few shelves of books for the Blind, and the library will soon grow from that. We want the Blind to read more in their leisure hours, and with an increased number of readers will come a greater demand and consequently a larger production; and—what is so much to be desired—a considerable cheapening of Braille literature.

I fully recognise the value and benefit of the National Lending Library for the Blind, Belsize Road, London, but that one is not *free*; it is expensive, for besides the subscription there is the heavy expense of carriage of the books to and from the reader. It worthily fills its place, but its benefits must always be limited, and it can never reach all classes. What I desire to urge in all these matters is equal treatment for the Blind as for the Seeing. Free libraries for the Seeing, why not for the Blind? If any members of the Conference can make practical use of this suggestion in their respective localities I trust they will endeavour to do so.

THE CHAIRMAN:

I think this is a very valuable suggestion. Nearly every Corporation has a library—some boroughs have two or three. I have no doubt that the Committees would carefully consider the suggestion if there is a need for it.

MISS DOUGLAS-HAMILTON (Indigent Blind Visiting Society):

My lord, I had no intention of speaking this afternoon, but after Miss Bell's speech I felt bound to say that this is the

first intimation we have received that she wished to resign. She certainly said when she left the room after our last Committee Meeting that she was sure Dr. Campbell would resign, but no intimation of such desire came from him, and therefore we could not know that any of them wished to leave the Committee.

As regards the Braille, Grade II. seems to be particularly misunderstood. There has been no radical change in it. It is practically what it was, but with the addition of some five hundred new words; the rules in the main are as they were before; the most important difference being that the italics can be used before some lower signs, and the addition of auxiliary signs. Then people have said—how can you read S T H U H M. That was not meant for Grade II., but for Grade III.

Sth (th is one sign in Braille) stands for saith; U for unto: hm for him. This no doubt appears very strange to a person who does not understand Braille.

But any intelligent blind person finding this in his Bible, though the first time he might be puzzled for moment, would almost immediately understand it to be—saith unto him. This only takes five spaces, instead of nine, when written in the present way.

THURSDAY, APRIL 24th.

The chair was taken at 10 a.m. by Sir JOHN M. STIRLING MAXWELL, Bart., M.P., who said:

Ladies and gentlemen, I am told that the chairman is expected to say one or two words before the business begins, but as I have come here in the capacity of listener, I need hardly say that I have no intention of doing more than offer a few observations. There can be no difference of opinion as to the great importance of the work in which you are engaged, from any point of view, especially from that of the philanthropist or statesman. There is, beyond the interest which the work has in common with other work of the kind, a poetic completeness about it, for it transforms a blind man, otherwise a burden on his fellows, into a useful citizen who takes his share in public and private work. There is a poetic completeness about it which must appeal to everyone. The only view that I can express on my own behalf is the hope that the results of this Conference may be given to the world in as wide a form as possible, because I am quite sure that the people outside cannot be told too much about the work in which you are engaged. It interests all who come under its influence, but in this busy world there are a great many matters which would interest people, but

never come under their eyes unless they are brought there. Let us therefore make this Conference as widely known as possible.

Now we will proceed to the business of the day, and I will first call upon Mr. Wilson to make a few announcements.

MR. WILSON :

I wish to make a few announcements. The first is with regard to the Official Report. It will not be ready for some time, so it is no use to write letters. A proof of every paper and of every speech will be sent to the respective writers and speakers, in order to ensure, as far as possible, everything being correct. Copies of the Report will be sent to all who will fill in the order forms.

The next announcement is, that those who were unfortunately, through lack of time, unable to speak on Mr. Stainsby's paper yesterday (there are eight names) can, if they wish, have what they intended to say inserted in the Report if they will kindly write it out briefly.

Then another announcement I have to make is, that as the Conference began with a Service in Belgrave Chapel, so it is felt that we ought not to separate without imploring the blessing of Almighty God, without Whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, upon the discussions. Mr. McNeile, the Vicar of Brafferton, Yorkshire, will therefore, at five o'clock, give a short address and lead us in united prayer. This will not exceed fifteen minutes at the outside, and therefore we shall be very little later than usual.

I hope everybody who applied for Concert Tickets have got them. If not, please let me know.

With regard to the visits to Institutions, nothing has been definitely arranged as regards going in parties, but I am authorised to state that the authorities of all the three Institutions mentioned in the prospectus will be pleased to welcome any member of the Conference from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

I received this morning a letter from the Rev. J. P. Thompson, Vicar of Christchurch, Chelsea, which may interest those who live in London. He says: "The arrangement of the Coronation Dinners for the Blind has been placed entirely in my hands, and I shall be glad to receive suggestions and help from the Committee and Secretaries of the various London Societies. It will be my one desire to arrange these dinners in the fullest harmony and sympathy with kindred Societies, and I shall be glad if a meeting could be arranged to discuss the best way of carrying out the wishes of the King."

I am directed by the Committee of Gardner's Trust to state that they feel (and nobody can feel more strongly than I do as the Secretary) that it would be a great pity if no definite result came of this Conference. The Committee earnestly wish to

make it of some practical good to the Blind. It has been suggested that at least two Committees should be formed, but it is best not to do this on the spur of the moment. It would be better to consider whom you would like elected on the Committees, handing in the names to me at the afternoon meeting. It is proposed to have one Committee on the "defective" Blind, and that it should consist of five members, Mr. Loch being one, and a representative of the Gardner's Trust another. There will be, therefore, three vacancies for the Conference to fill up. The other Committee will be on uniform Braille. We all feel a very deep interest in this question, and it is proposed that this Committee should be formed of seven members. Five names have been suggested, viz., Mr. Illingworth, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Ranger, a representative of the Board of Education (if willing to serve), and a representative of the Bible Society. There is hardly any reason to state why the last-named is mentioned, because the British and Foreign Bible Society is ready and willing to print any number of books in Braille, but does not know what system to adopt. In addition to those persons already mentioned, two remain to be elected by the Conference. Ladies are eligible for election on these Committees.

THE CHAIRMAN :

If any tickets for the Concert are required, applications should be sent to Dr. Campbell at the College. The Concert is not till to-morrow. You can make application by telegram this afternoon.

**PROVISION FOR THE AGED BY MEANS OF
PENSIONS, HOMES, OR OTHERWISE.**

BY W. S. SETON-KARR, ESQ.,

Chairman of the Committee of Gardner's Trust for the Blind.

It will be obvious that, in ordinary cases, this term "pension" may be considered to represent something which has been earned by a lengthened service in some profession, civil, military, or other, or which is given by the Directors or Managers of a great institution or firm, to employées who merit a recompense for the intelligence and capacity with which they have for years discharged the functions and conducted the business committed to their hands. Practically it is a provision for retirement or old age. In the case of the Blind, a pension is often bestowed, not because a candidate has earned it by good hard work, but simply for the reason that there is no other means of mitigating his affliction. In the case of sighted persons, whether their lives

have been spent in the service of Government, or of a railway or other institution, it is not unusual to expect that a candidate and claimant for an annuity has served so many years, has filled certain posts, has satisfied certain distinct and positive conditions, and has reached a high standard, before his case can be considered at all; and it is a matter of common experience that when these requirements have not been met, a gratuity, or possibly a terminable annuity is given, and is thought sufficient to meet the case. But I think that it cannot be denied that strict rules which imperatively require a certain length of service and the attainment of certain grades, often result in disqualifying some very meritorious individuals, and in the denial of benefits and easements to those who, on every other ground, seem most to deserve sufficient and permanent relief.

In the allotment of pensions to the Blind, it has been found desirable by the Committee of The Gardner's Trust, and I think by other Societies or Institutions, to allot pensions by some sort of method and principle, without laying down rigid rules and formulas which, as already observed, might operate ungenerously and inequitably in the case of persons with a strong claim to kind and generous consideration.

As a general rule, subject to relaxation in peculiar and exceptional cases, it may be said that pensions should not be granted to minors or adults, or to a numerous class of persons who are not only not disqualified from using their other senses of hearing and touch, but who on every ground, of the relief of the individual and of general policy, ought to be taught to earn a livelihood by the exercise of a trade, a profession, or a technical art. It may be fairly argued that up to middle age, persons suddenly deprived of sight, if they have no turn for music, may learn basket or brush making, or even the humbler trade of chair caning or wood chopping, and with ordinary intelligence may become fairly familiar with standard works in the Braille or Moon type. Nor is it too much to say, that under a merciful and mysterious dispensation of Providence, deprivation of the blessing of sight is not unfrequently followed by a greater receptivity of sounds and voices, and by greater sensitiveness of touch. I may add on this part of the subject that although a pension may be given, not because a blind person has merited one by work done, but because it may be difficult and even impossible to hit on anything they can do, it is at the same time desirable, as far as possible, to prevent a pensioner from sitting down in the security of an annual gratuity and refusing to attempt even the lightest work, and to discharge the most ordinary domestic and social functions. Moreover, it must be remembered that the grant of a pension to one of a family may be the means of lightening the burden of the sighted wife or

relation, and may have a good effect independent of the one individual to whom it is granted. The yearly pensions of The Gardner's Trust are £20, £15, and £10 in amount; and there is little doubt that on the lowest scale they do relieve the household from perpetual anxiety about the payment of rent and the fear of a disturbance. They do not enable the holder to dispense with the necessity for exertion, or the sighted members of a household to cease work, and there is every reason to believe that a pensioner, male or female, may still continue to practise those customary quiet occupations which relieve the dullness of existence and pass the tedious hours away.

Here it is not out of place to quote some excellent remarks from the Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb, published in 1889. At page xxxi., par. 152, the Commissioners write:—

“Evidence has been laid before us, tending to the conclusion that the pensions are not always administered to the best advantage; the persons who award the pensions have no personal knowledge of the training, aptitude, and character of the blind persons; and the result is that pensions are often granted when they would have been better withheld, and withheld when they might with advantage have been granted, and the pensions are often awarded to those who have the most influential friends and are given sometimes by several Societies to the same individual, without any intercommunication between the Societies. Such interchange of lists is carried out by *some* of the leading London Charities.”

The Committee of The Gardner's Trust have uniformly observed the above principles and others of a similar kind in the selection of individuals and the bestowal of pensions. They have for years enlisted the services of various branches of the Charity Organisation Society in ascertaining all the necessary facts and particulars about candidates, and they have referred to other charities, to the Incumbent of the Parish, or other trustworthy person resident on the spot. There is a phrase which is sometimes used with regard to the assistance derived from more than one source. It is called the “overlapping of charities,” as if, in itself, there was some vital principle at stake, or as if it were against sound policy that half-a-dozen individuals or two or three Societies ought to be debarred from all association in philanthropic aims. Of course it is desirable that various agencies should not work in darkness and ignorance of each other's objects and aims. But I have seen the above phrase used by speakers and writers as if it were a positive outrage on decency and morality that Lady Bountiful should assist a case to which the Squire and the Vicar have already given something, according to their knowledge and means. The Gardner's Trust

have not unfrequently supplemented a pension given by the Clothworkers Company or Hetherington's, by another of more than equal amount. Indeed, a case so treated has the advantage of careful examination by two independent bodies, whose aim it is to prevent benevolence from degenerating into mere sentiment, and to administer charity under the guidance of sound judgment and practical good sense.

In another paragraph (156), the Commissioners incline to the opinion that if the funds now given as pensions could be used to supplement still further the earnings of skilful workmen, it would be an immense stimulus to work, and the pension would be "looked on as a reward for industry rather than an excuse for idleness." This, theoretically, may appear right, but the difficulty in carrying out such a plan is that it would require repeated and even constant supervision and enquiry as to the pensioners' habits, mode of work, and amount of earnings. The Commissioners, in the same paragraph, say that, at present, "no supervision is exercised to test the way in which the pensions are used by the recipients." The Gardner's Trust does, every year, demand a report on the circumstances of each of the pensioners; on their character and position; but, as already stated, they think that a constant and close supervision might be irritating, if effective, and might possibly lead to concealment, evasion, or deceit. If the pensions are given to the aged and the infirm and are refused to those who are still able to employ themselves in the trade or business which they have learnt, supervision ceases to have very great importance, and The Gardner's Trust entirely endorse the discouragement given to a hope, unfortunately entertained by many afflicted and indigent persons, that every blind person, of whatever age or position in life, should be entitled to a pension. To say nothing of the expense, such a proceeding, even if funds were forthcoming from any source, public or private, would tend to remove the motive for independence, exertion, and self-help.

With other conditions mentioned in the Report of the Commission, The Gardner Trustees are in complete accordance. Such for instance, as the suggestion that Parish Relief, unless given just before the application, or within one year or say two years previously, should not invariably operate as a disqualification; that there is no necessity for a hard and fast condition as to age; that the various Societies and Trusts should act in a sort of co-operation with each other, and should keep registers and lists of successful applicants, as The Gardner's Trust does, for mutual information; and that the recipient should not be paid the lump sum quarterly, but be paid fortnightly or monthly by the clergyman, the magistrate, or the secretary to any local society. It may be added with reference to one of the above suggestions

that Boards of Guardians are generally ready and willing to co-operate with proposals from other quarters which would have the effect of raising the necessitous Blind above the Pauper status. They have no wish to see such persons helped indefinitely out of the rates. And cases might be quoted where, after the age of sixteen, instruction has been given by charities, while the Guardians have supplied an outfit, paid for instruction, and given other assistance necessary to start the individual on a new course. And in some cases, the Guardians pay for paupers received into Homes.

After what has been said in this paper, in a general way, as to the selection of Candidates and the allotment of pensions, it seems only natural that individual cases should be specified, without giving names, in order to show how the system actually works. The facts in each case are as correct as detailed reports and careful examination and comparison can make them. They may be classified under three heads. Class I. comprise those blind persons who have become afflicted at a rather late period of life, and who, from age or infirmity are obviously incapable of being taught in any Institution or under any scheme of Instruction. Class II. refers to cases the very opposite to No. I; that is to persons for whom application for this mode of relief should not have been made at all, and to whom the grant of a pension would, most likely, be an injurious and ill-directed form of benevolence. This class should be taught, as an expert has put it, "to know how to be blind and what to do." Class III. contains cases half-way between No. I. and No. II., such as require the greatest amount of care, thought, and circumspection, and in which if a pension is given, it can only be as a last resource, when all other suggestions and recommendations have been found impolitic, useless, or injurious.

In the first category are the following cases.

The daughter of a Church Dignitary; highly gifted and a good linguist. At her father's death money was left her, in the hands of a single trustee, who invested it in a speculation which turned out a complete failure. She lived with her mother, who was independently provided for, but who, like her daughter, also lost her money from bad investments. The daughter, after her own loss, held the post of matron of a Nurses' Home, and gave instruction in languages, literature and drawing, until blindness came on at the age of fifty-two. She then returned to live with her mother, and was active in the parish, with local work, teaching in a Sunday School, visiting the poor, and starting a Savings Bank. She had no turn for music, and, of course, basket making and chair caning were not suitable occupations. A pension of £10 a year was granted, and there is no reason to think that this moderate relief would cause any interruption to her charitable and unpaid work in the Parish.

The second case is that of a man nearly sixty years of age ; he was a gate-keeper on the Great Western Railway on 21/- a week, till blindness came on when he was about fifty-nine years old, and he lost his situation. His wife was earning about 10/- a week as laundress, and a daughter was a general servant on £14 a year. Eventually his wife had a paralytic stroke, and the daughter was obliged to give up service and come home to look after her parents. Husband and wife had both belonged to clubs, but after a time, under the rules, the allowances ceased. We felt that the only help possible in such straits was a pension of £10 a year.

The third case is that of a woman aged seventy-eight. She had been cook in a family and had saved £250, on which she subsisted, for some years, with failing health and increasing blindness. She was never married, and lived with a friend. This seemed a case where it would be useless to urge the continuance of work, and which could only be met by a pension of £10 a year.

The fourth case is that of a tailor aged seventy, who belonged to the Amalgamated Tailors' Society, Hearts of Oak, and had saved £220, on which he lived for some time ; he bore an excellent character, had no relations, but was supported by a friend not much older than himself who was living on an annuity. Here, again, blindness prevented him from following his accustomed trade, and age prevented him from learning any other work. A pension of £10 a year seemed the only way of helping him.

The fifth case, a woman of seventy-three, went blind from the shock of a fire in which her husband perished, and all her goods and premises were destroyed. She had kept a shop for thirty-five years, and bore a high character. She had no children, and was living on her diminishing savings. It would have been very hazardous to find her capital to start another shop. A pension of £10 was allotted.

The sixth, and last case in this category, is that of a man aged seventy, who, with the help of one son, farmed a small extent of pasture land for thirty-six years. Owing to agricultural depression and low prices, and heavy expenses incurred in no less than eleven operations on his eyes, he became a bankrupt. Of two daughters, one did needlework, and the other was occupied in attending to her parents. The son who had aided in the farm was trying hard to get a situation on some other estate. Here, again, what could be done to help, except to allot a pension of £10 a year ?

Many similar cases could be mentioned, if time and space permitted, but the above seem sufficient.

In the second category of these cases, the very ground on

which an application was sometimes made, that if a pension were granted, the other relief might cease, seemed a very good reason for refusal.

In the first case. A man aged forty was supported by:—

- (1). His wife who did washing and took in lodgers.
- (2). A son who contributed 8/- a week.
- (3). A daughter who contributed 6/- a week.
- (4). A small sum from the Indigent Blind Society.
- (5). Aid from the parish "outdoor relief."

It did not seem a case where the Committee could have the least doubt as to the withholding of a pension.

No. 2. A woman aged thirty-seven. She could do plain needle-work. A pension was applied for and refused, but the Trust offered to send her free to an Institution for the training of the Blind. The offer was accepted, and for two years she has made a satisfactory progress there. No relations, except a brother serving in South Africa.

No. 3. A blind man; wife sighted; no family. Had supported himself before and after blindness in the cutlery and glass business. Pension was refused, but as the stock of ware was exhausted, he received a grant of £4 to set him up again. The Marylebone C. O. S. had carefully enquired into and reported favourably on this case.

No. 4. A widower, with two sons. One of them was 29 years old and married, and earned about 17/- a week; the other, a tailor, not married, had £1 a week. The two sons between them paid their father's rent, and he had a pension from the Clothworkers Society and help from the Odd Fellows. He had saved nothing when in receipt of very good wages. It seemed that this was just the case in which the sons and two daughters might fairly be left to support their father, and that the grant of a pension might simply have the effect of stopping or reducing the amount of the children's support.

No. 5. A widow, with no family, represented one of those parish cases which ought to be left to the operation of the Poor Law. She had been for some time in the receipt of outdoor relief; and if the amount given was not sufficient, the Guardians should give more or else take her into the house. It is not the business of a Charity to vie with the Parish Authorities in supporting paupers and in relieving rates.

No. 6. A very similar case. A single woman, living with her brother-in-law in receipt of good wages. The applicant did something in knitting and chair-caning, and had relief from the parish.

No. 7. A woman, aged 33, blinded by a blow from her husband, for which he was sent to prison. Pension refused; but £10 : 8s. was given for instruction in a trade. The grant was

renewed for a second year, and she was recently reported to be making satisfactory progress.

No. 8. A man, over 50; had parish relief, and added to this, played music and sang in the streets. It is one of the fundamental rules of the Trust not to assist itinerant musicians, who frequent public-houses, and loaf in public places.

Many similar cases could be quoted, but the above are all typical, and have a resemblance to each other.

PENSIONS. THIRD CLASS.

The two classes described and particularised above are, it may be said, divided by clear lines. Those in the first category could not, if worthy of any help, have been assisted in any other way; they either deserved pensions or they deserved nothing. For most of those in the second category, no claim to pension should have been made, but some were thought capable of making some effort for themselves, and they were shewn how they might attain this end. But between these two classes there is a third class, which may be described as on the border line; and which, as already said, required closer investigation and more careful treatment than the other two.

No. 1 had been an assistant teacher in a Blind Institution of a manufacturing town, and had saved some money, which was spent, owing to the long illness of her husband. She had two grown-up sons, who, it was thought, might have been fairly expected to contribute to their mother's support. But it transpired that the elder was consumptive, and had ceased to earn anything, and the second son was a clerk in the Goods Department of a Railway, on some 13/- or 14/- a week. It was shewn, further that, owing to failing health, the candidate could no longer earn her livelihood as a teacher, and as a local Institution promised the sum of £5 a year, a pension of £10 was granted from The Gardner's Trust. The case was moreover well known to the Vicar of the Parish.

No. 2 was 40 years of age, and had been blind from birth. He was employed as messenger at a blind workshop, and occasionally might have earned something extra by chair-caning. His wife contributed about 3/- a week by needlework. But his health suddenly failed, and he was wholly incapacitated from work. He belonged to a Club, and had some aid from a Society for Home Teaching to the Blind. The late Rev. Brook Lambert, the well-known Vicar of Greenwich, was much interested in the case. A pension of £10 was granted to this applicant in 1900, but, owing to the rapid progress of consumption, he only enjoyed it for half a year.

No. 3. A quarryman, fifty years old, was earning 30/- a week. He lost his sight by an explosion, but was able to play

the organ on Sundays in Church, for £5 a year. He was not suited for any other work or trade. It is admitted that he had a wife and three grown up daughters, two of whom lived with their parents and helped in laundry work. The applicant belonged to a Club, which made him a grant of £19 after his accident. Then, it was shewn conclusively after much correspondence that, while his wife and daughters were struggling and doing their best to keep the home together, a pension would make all the difference between the feeling that, come what might, they would have a house over their heads, and a perpetual struggle to make ends meet. A pension of £10 secured this desirable result.

No. 4. Forty-four years of age, was brought up as a Civil Engineer, but had to give up work owing to extreme nervous debility. His case led to a considerable correspondence which need not be specified in detail. Another member of the family was blind, and he was already a heavy burden on his relations. But it did not appear that anything except a pension would meet this candidate's case, and one of £10 was granted, which on the occurrence of a vacancy, was increased to £15 a year.

No. 5. Only thirty years of age, was a cripple, paralysed on one side, and nearly blind from his infancy. His case was the subject of a lengthy correspondence as to the ability of the friends and relations to do something for him, or for his reception at a Home at Chiswick or at some other Institution. It was physically impossible for him to learn any trade and to earn his own livelihood in any way, and his mother having married again unhappily, the stepfather would contribute nothing. The candidate was one of those peculiarly irritable natures, which it is very difficult to influence or control. There was no other means of helping him but by a pension of £10 a year.

No. 6, and last case, was that of a widow aged forty-four, without a child, who had lived by journalism, earning about a guinea a week. Her loss of sight was simply due to overwork in reading and writing. She was the widow of a lieutenant in the Army, who got into trouble and had been dead some years. In this case, after much correspondence with gentlemen and ladies thoroughly acquainted with the facts, it did not seem to us that there was any way of helping a deserving widow, not very old, blind, crippled, and partly paralysed, except by a pension. She could no longer use the pen or do skilled needlework.

HOMES.

In the matter of expense, there is often not much difference between a Home and a Pension. Homes for the aged Blind are now being started in various towns, but a few years ago there were not more than seven of these useful Institutions in all England—two in London, and others at Bristol, Leicester, and

other large towns. The advantage of a Home, in which persons of either sex can be received, is obvious, but it must not be over-estimated. The inmates are all cared for under one roof and one administration. The dormitories are comfortable and clean. The food, though of course plain, is well cooked. The requirements of sanitation are met. There is every reasonable opportunity for intercourse and conversation. On the other hand, the Blind are separated from their old friends and associates, and there is no possibility of new employment. They may continue to do knitting and plain needlework. Younger people could learn more at Industrial Homes. I observed in one Home for the Aged that about one-third of the occupants did something in the way of hemming dusters and mending clothes. At this, and at another Home, benevolent ladies found time to read aloud, and there were few days when, both in the mornings and afternoons, this was not the practice. Though the rules of such establishments are by no means harsh, there is often a feeling that the unavoidable discipline is somewhat irksome, and is tantamount to a loss of independence, especially in the case of the aged. A Home for the Aged may therefore be looked on as a place of retirement, comfort, and cleanliness, with such solace as companionship can afford, backed by the efforts of philanthropists to amuse and impart information to those who can only "stand and wait."

A Pension, accompanied with residence amongst relations and friends, has, in preference to a Home, certain things to recommend it. There is no severance of old ties. The son, daughter, or near relation, may rejoice in the power to repay, in some measure, the care and attention which they themselves received in their youth. There is no peremptory or strict enforcement of rules, which, it cannot be denied, some of the class benefited are apt to resent. On the other hand, it is essential that the duty of tending a grandmother or parent should be performed with sympathy and cheerfulness, if it is to make life easy. And it is just possible that the sighted relation may discharge her daily task with a cold and barren formality, and that the aged person may be exacting and somewhat querulous. It would not be safe to lay down any positive rule and test for the cases which are fitted for residence in a Home, as distinguished from those where the family live together under one roof. But generally it may be said that where relations are kind and affectionate and the house decent, it may be well that the blind Joan and the sighted Darby should not be separated while life lasts. The late Mr. Fawcett laid great stress on this point, as appears from one of his recorded speeches.

I am unwilling to encumber this paper with a long array of facts and figures as to the ages and previous occupations of

pensioners or of residents in a Home. But a few statistics may be interesting. There are nearly forty Societies in England and Wales which assist the Blind by pensions. Most of these Institutions have their own rules as to age, character, and amount of pension. Usually the pensions range from £10 to £20, or about the scale adopted by The Gardner's Trust. One such Society, The Benevolent Institution for Governesses, pays as high as £50 a year. But there are several that give £5, and even less, annually. It should be noted here that it is the practice of The Gardner's Trust to admit candidates to the lowest scale of £10, and, if they are very necessitous or deserving, to promote them, eventually, to the higher rate of £15 or £20 on the occurrence of vacancies. And it has not seldom been remarked by persons conversant with these matters that the higher the pension, the longer the life of the annuitant!

I have endeavoured to compress my remarks on the subject allotted me into a reasonable compass, though much more might be said, and to set before you the principles and practice and some of the details, of that portion of the administration of The Gardner's Trust, which deals with Pensions and Homes. I take this opportunity of saying that in this work, I have relied much on the assistance, advice, and co-operation of colleagues, who bring to the decision of all cases a ripe and wide experience gained in the Civil or Military Service of the Crown, and in other important duties of life. They have contributed much to that healthy, but not excessive friction of opinion which, it has been said somewhere, elicits the sparks of truth. Nor is it at all out of place to mention that since the Fund came into operation some twenty years ago, two of the Committee, father and son, bear names identified with everything that is beneficent, sympathetic, and sound in public and private charity. I may further express a hope that by the working of schools and societies throughout the Kingdom, the Blind, young and old, male and female, will find their burden lightened and their condition improved; and that they may be enabled to take some part in the occupations and employments which, at first sight, seem to belong exclusively to the sighted portion of the community. It is not, of course, to be expected that many of those afflicted by the loss of sight will rise and discharge important duties, and fill a large space in the public eye or the busy world. But it is good for everyone, in whatever line or profession, to have before him examples of how difficulties may be confronted, obstacles overcome, and eminence obtained. And I may on such an occasion and to such an assemblage, quote what has been written about a great name in our literature and our political history, by one who was himself a politician, an historian, and a critic. "There are few

characters," he writes, "which have stood the closest scrutiny and the severest tests, which have been tried in the furnace and have proved pure, which have been weighed in the balance and have not been found wanting, which have been declared sterling by the general consent of mankind, and which are visibly stamped with the image and superscription of the Most High. These great men we trust that we know how to prize, and of these was Milton." And, in our own generation, to say nothing of blind philanthropists who have done much to brighten the lives of their less capable brethren, we can recall a politician whose honesty, sincerity, and capacity for work were gladly acknowledged by men of every shade and complexion of politics. He was, indeed, one who "breasted the bars of circumstance," was always listened to with respect in the House, and eventually, to the satisfaction of us all, presided over a Department of the State, which, more than any other, daily and hourly ministers to the wants and requirements of both sexes and all classes and sections of the community. A few more remarks and I will detain you no longer. I remember the late John Bright, in one of those magnificent deliverances by which, on the platform or in the Senate, by substance, earnestness, diction and delivery, he seemed to hold large audiences spellbound and even awestruck, quoting some lines from an English classic of the eighteenth century, which I venture to repeat. If those lines are not to be accepted in a literal sense, they yet appeal to all that is holiest in human natures, and all that is highest in human destiny.

" 'One comes,' he said, 'by ancient bards foretold,'
Hear him, ye deaf, and all ye blind, behold,
He from thick films shall purge the visual ray,
And on the sightless eyeballs pour the day."

In this age, we do not look for the miraculous intervention and cure of disease and disaster, but we know that knowledge and progressive medical skill can do much to preserve the inestimable blessing of sight, or to restore it when darkened by temporary causes, and that sympathy and care may have also their sphere of action in educating the faculties and brightening the lot of the humblest and poorest of the blind among us. Some distinct items can, by individual effort, be subtracted from what must always be a huge aggregate of human affliction and woe; and those who in the Press or on the platform employ their influence to assist these worthy objects, or who support such Institutions by direct administration, or by that charity which assumes a substantial and solid form, may, I venture to think, indulge a humble and yet a reasonable hope that, in the words of the great exponent of Induction, they are contributing something which tends to the Glory of God and to the relief of Man's estate.

THE CHAIRMAN :

Ladies and gentlemen, the Registrar-General is a very busy man, and will have to get away. I am therefore going to call upon him to read his paper, which is very closely allied to the last one. I should like to point out that this change in the usual-order of procedure will not preclude a full discussion on Mr. Seton-Karr's paper afterwards.

THE BLIND :**Their Numbers, Social Condition, Occupations, and other Statistics, as revealed by the 1901 Census.**

BY REGINALD MACLEOD, ESQ., C.B.,

Registrar-General, and Member of the Home Teaching Society for the Blind (London).

When first asked to read a paper to-day on Statistics of the Blind, I replied in the negative, on the ground that the Census results could not be abstracted and prepared for several months after the present date. When, however, in spite of that reply, I was again urged to meet you and give the best facts at my disposal, I could not hesitate to comply.

Particulars in regard to the Blind have been abstracted for the eight largest counties in England and Wales, namely:— London, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Stafford, Durham, Essex, Kent, and Glamorgan, possessing together a population of 17,816,856 considerably more than one moiety of the whole. In reference to this population, I can speak positively, but for the rest of England, nothing but inferences can be drawn.

The first Census in which enquiries had been made as to the Blind, was taken in 1851, and in that year there were in England and Wales 1,021 Blind persons in every million of the population.

In 1861 the proportion was reduced to 964 per 1,000,000.

In 1871	"	"	"	"	951	"	"
In 1881	"	"	"	"	879	"	"
In 1891	"	"	"	"	809	"	"
In 1901 (partly estimated)	"	"	"	"	786	"	"

In Scotland the proportion in 1891 was lower, being no mere than 695 per million, but in Ireland it was much greater, being no less than 1,135 per million. Moreover, the Irish total was arrived at after a special form of enquiry had been sent through the Constabulary, who are there employed as Census Enumerators, and the result of this enquiry was to show that of the 6,663 persons returned as Blind on the Census Schedules, 1322 were only partially blind, and the returns were therefore

amended, reducing the number of totally blind to 5,341. In England and Scotland, it has not yet been found possible to institute supplementary enquiries of this sort, owing to the fact that the enumeration is not in the hands of the members of any organised service. It is, however, an obvious inference that, if such secondary enquiry could be made, the numbers of the totally blind would be reduced, and the contrast with Ireland would be more striking.

The proportions in a few of the great European countries may also be given, for which purpose I avail myself of the figures given by M. Bertillon in his collection of International Census Statistics.

I must, however, point out that the figures for France are derived from the Census of 1870, those for Italy, Spain and Prussia from that of 1880, and those for the remaining countries from that of 1890. It is very possible that, as with ourselves, the tendency has been downward since these dates.

The Netherlands ranks first with 468 blind per million.

Italy next with	763	"	"	"
Then Austria "	806	"	"	"
Sweden "	825	"	"	"
Prussia "	830	"	"	"
Then France "	836	"	"	"

In a decidedly worse position

Hungary follows with	1051	"	"	"
Norway "	1279	"	"	"
And Spain "	1479	"	"	"

I give these figures as published, but it must be borne in mind that differences in the form of the Census Schedule or in method of abstraction may be responsible for some portion of the differences apparently existing in the several countries.

Returning now to the figures for England, I said the last figures for 1901 are partly estimated, and I must tell you how. The proportion in the eight abstracted counties was for 1891, 749 per million, and for 1901, 728 per million. The proportion in the rest of England was for 1891, 881 per million.

These are ascertained facts, but, having no figures for the remaining counties for 1901, I venture on the inference that the reduction has been proportionately the same as in the abstracted counties. This gives us for 1901 for the rest of England, 856 per million, and we can easily arrive at the proportion for the whole of England and Wales as already stated, viz. 786 per million. It may be noticed in passing that the proportion of Blind in these eight great counties, which are principally manufacturing and mining, is less than in the rest of England, in which rural life more largely predominates. This may partly be accounted for by the tendency of the healthy and capable to seek

the higher wages of the great urban communities, leaving the aged and incapable, including, of course, the Blind, in their old homes.

Now the total number of blind persons in England and Wales estimated on this basis is 25,551. That may be accepted as the existing blind population, and I want to suggest a contrast for your consideration. If there had been no proportionate reduction effected in the last fifty years, and there had remained 1,021 blind persons for every million of the population, the number of blind would have been 33,224, or more than are estimated to exist by 7,673. The improvement is very great and is certainly, in the main, attributable to the greater precautions taken to prevent Purulent Ophthalmia, to improvements in surgical treatment, and to diminished prevalence of Small Pox.

I must now say a few words about the Sexes and Ages of the Blind. Males indubitably suffer from blindness more than females in this country. In 1891, 874 persons in every million males were blind, while only 748 were so afflicted in every million females. This is assumed to be largely owing to the greater exposure incurred by men engaged in injurious or dangerous occupations. Still the fact remains that the proportion of males blind from childhood is materially greater. In the same year (1891), 156 males per million were blind from childhood and only 121 females. Congenital blindness therefore appears to follow the known proportion of other congenital defects in the two sexes.

The proportion of blind persons to persons of the same age in enjoyment of sight increases steadily throughout life, and in advanced years with startling rapidity. It has been already stated that in 1891 the proportion of blind to the total population was 809 per million; in the first years of life it amounted to no more than 155, but between 65 and 75 the proportion rose to 4,133, between 75 and 85 to 9,849, and above 85 to 19,073. It is at first sight curious that, while males of all ages suffer from blindness more than females, the proportion is reversed after the age of 75 years, when the number of females per million becomes materially greater. This is, of course, accounted for by the well-known superior longevity of the female sex. After 85, out of every hundred persons living, about 63 are women, and the excess of blind females over males in the extreme ages is therefore only what should be expected.

The effect which blindness from childhood has upon social conditions in after-life opens up an interesting field of enquiry. In the eight counties referred to, of the 829 males over 15 years of age, returned as blind from childhood, 263, or 31·7 per cent. are or have been married, and of the 749 females, 136 or 18·2 per cent.; these figures contrast with 59 per cent. of

males and 61 per cent. of females of the same ages in the general population married or widowed. It would thus appear blindness from childhood is not such a bar to marriage as might have been expected, especially in the case of males, when it is remembered how difficult it must be for a man, so situated, to obtain a regular livelihood equal to the support of others. How such marriages prosper and whether they result in any great proportion of blind children are subjects as to which the Census furnishes no reply. I wish it did.

I turn now to the question of Occupations. How do the Blind live; to what extent are they dependent on others; how far can they engage in any remunerative calling? But here I must confine myself to the 12,968 blind persons in the eight counties, for we are entering on details so small that from these figures no general inference for the rest of England can safely be drawn. First, as to the males over ten years of age, numbering 6,337; 2918 were returned as engaged in occupations, but of that number, 144 were at the time of the Census in the workhouse and not therefore, at the moment at all events, earning their own living. This leaves 2,774 or 43·8 per cent. of the whole number supporting themselves, and 3,563 or 56·2 per cent. dependent on others or living on their own means. Similarly, out of the 5,941 females over ten, who were blind, 724 were returned as engaged in occupations, but deducting again 84 in the workhouse, the actual number who were earning a living was 640, or 10·8 per cent., while 5,301 or 89·2 per cent. were dependent on others or living on their own means. These figures contrast with about 85 per cent. of males and about 38 per cent. of females over ten engaged in occupations of the population at large. Thus it appears that about half as many blind males, and rather more than one-fourth as many blind females earn their own living as in the case of the general population. I am disposed to think that these figures err on the hopeful side, and that in some cases the blind are returned as occupied in some trade when it should have been said they were formerly occupied, but now are retired from it.

It is interesting to contrast the foregoing figures which deal with the entire body of blind persons over 10 years of age in the eight counties, with similar figures dealing only with persons of similar ages returned as blind from childhood. The percentage of these last engaged in occupations was in the case of males 55·1 and in that of females 20·3, as contrasted respectively with 43·8 and 10·8 in the total blind population. That persons who have never had the advantage of sight should in larger proportions be able to earn their own living than those assailed by blindness in later years may probably be accounted for by two causes, (1) that the former are taught in early life some

trade not inconsistent with their infirmity, and (2) that so great a proportion of the Blind are persons of advanced years.

Dealing for a moment with individual trades, willow, cane, rush-working, and basket-making stand first, employing 490 males and 107 females in the eight counties. Costermongering and street-selling employ 234 blind persons, 209 males and 25 females. Musicians, music masters, and singers number 331 males and 41 females. It is noteworthy that of these no less than 128 males and 22 females were blind from childhood. There are also 141 male musical instrument makers and pianoforte tuners, the last calling seeming to be peculiarly within the power of the Blind, and their general aptitude for musical pursuits is fostered by such an Institution as the Royal Normal College and Academy of Music, which had in 1900 no less than 157 pupils.

It would be easy for me to multiply statistics to your utter weariness, but I have endeavoured to restrict myself to a few salient points of general interest to those who concern themselves with the welfare of the Blind. The facts, so far as figures speak, seem to me to be full of encouragement and reward for all who labour on their behalf. Their numbers are growing less, at least in proportion, and their prosperity is growing greater, and this is largely due to the admirable training now provided in so many Institutions. I find that in England and Wales, 41 Societies or Institutions are concerned with the instruction of the Blind, and of these, 24 are largely devoted to the reception and training of blind children.

THE CHAIRMAN :

Ladies and gentlemen, I think it will be best to take the discussions separately. I would suggest, therefore, that the discussion on Mr. McLeod's paper should be taken first, while he is still with us, as it will probably take the form of questions.

DR. ROCKLIFFE, (Hull Institution):

Mr. Chairman, I feel certain we are all very much obliged to the Registrar General for his kindness in bringing these figures before us. Nevertheless I will not waste your time by eulogising his Paper, but will turn straight to the point. In formulating these statistics, I should like to know when he considers a man to be blind? What is the standard of vision, or defective vision, that constitutes blindness? I do not see how he can possibly arrive at anything like statistics, unless there is some sort of definition of a blind man. This has always been a very great difficulty, viz. : as to who are blind and who should be admitted into workshops and charities for education. Under the Education Act "a child is blind who is unable to read the ordinary school type," and so far as education is concerned I suppose that is quite enough, but as many of these have a considerable amount of vision, (as we have just heard from this excellent Paper) there

is some objection to their entering into competition in workshops under the same conditions as those who are perfectly blind, especially, as, in our own workshops where a bonus is divided in proportion to what they earn; and the man who earns the most, gets the largest amount of bonus, and if that man has more sight than the others it is scarcely fair. I think we should have some definite hard and fast line as to when a man is to be considered blind, and so to compete with the totally blind. Then again "guiding sight" is sometimes taken as a definition of blindness. Therefore I would ask the question, first, what amount of his defective blind people are possessed of "guiding sight"? For many totally blind people pride themselves on the fact that they can go anywhere without a guide. That is not a statement which is so idiotic as it may sound. I will give you an instance. A man came to me from Newcastle, he had travelled all over the North of England, in search of work, and when he came to my house, he said, "he had heard I was a friend of the blind, he had not got a ha'penny, and had nothing to carry him on and he could not pay for his lodgings." He had travelled from Bradford to Doncaster, up to Goole, Thorne, and across the river. (He had no eyes in his head.) I did not believe him at first, but gave him a trifle and told him to get back to Newcastle. I said "which way are you going?" he pointed to Beverley. I afterwards met this very man with his bundle under his arm, taking a short cut as straight as possible to Beverley. That I consider to be instinct, and certainly not guiding sight.

I think therefore that a more suitable distinction ought to be made. Again, there is another class, viz., those who would probably regain their sight by an operation, but object to surgical interference. This class are hardly entitled to the funds left with the various charities for the Blind, unless they have had the opinion of an Ophthalmic Surgeon. The word "Blindness" ought only to include such cases as are irremediable by surgical or medical treatment. The usual methods of defining vision are, first, those who have no perception of light, secondly you have those who can see your hand moving, thirdly those who can count the fingers, and fourthly those who are unable to read the ordinary type, but who can read ordinary Test Type. In the first case the man without any perception of light must be classified as blind. Secondly those who can see your hand moving before their eyes, but cannot differentiate between your fingers. The next class are those who can count fingers, but the difficulty is, at what distance ought the so-called blind man to be able to count the fingers? I consider that if they can do it at more than one foot from their face, the line ought here to be drawn and that they should not be admitted to our Workshops as blind. It stands to reason that if a man can do this, he can

see to manipulate the willows much better than a man who cannot see light from dark, and when you come to a matter of bonus it is not fair to the really blind man. The next class are those who can read Test Type. Now I do not consider that the person who can read $\frac{3}{8}$ or $\frac{1}{8}$ of the ordinary test type should be classified as Blind. I would suggest that the Blind should be divided into three classes. (1) Those who have no perception whatever of light, (2) those who can see the hand moving but cannot count fingers, and (3) those who are able to count fingers but not at a greater distance than one foot. We should classify numbers 1 and 2 as Blind, and number 3 as defective. I think we should then be able to get at something in the shape of statistics which would be of assistance to such Societies as the Gardner's Trust, and others entrusted with Funds for the Blind.

I should like to allude to one or two points touched upon by the Registrar General. He made some comparisons, (but I did not follow them altogether), as I fail to grasp whom he classified as a blind man. Again what standard of loss of sight should be taken in reference to the Employers' Liability Act? People talk about children being born blind. It is absurd almost to talk about this. Cases of children entering the world totally blind are exceedingly rare; I have had some little experience for about 28 years, and I have been amongst it ever since I can remember, so that I have seen something of blindness, and I only know of two children with eyes in their heads that have been born blind. Congenital Amblyopia, that is to say, their eyes looked like other people's, but yet they were blind. Then there are those children born without eyes, an Ophthalmos, and then there is another class with partial sight. These are the only three classes which are so called correctly born blind. The majority of children called blind from birth are really nothing of the sort. It is due to Purulent Ophthalmia, which should not be in the present day. If a case of Purulent Ophthalmia is treated as it ought to be, there is no doubt those Blind from the disease would be few and far between. I can personally say that I have had many hundreds pass through my hands, and I have never lost a single case that I have seen in the first week. A few years ago many of these would have been blind. Then there is another class, from hereditary disease. It affects the cornea, and the child is blind, not because he is blind from disease at the back of the eye, but the front of the eye, or his window pane is dirty. It is as before stated an hereditary disease, termed Intestinal Keratitis, and unfortunately, in the majority of cases, associated with other defects.

A VOICE.

I should like to ask about what has been said about fewer people being blind in the town districts than in the country.

Does it not mean that in the town there are Ophthalmic Surgeons who are not obtainable in the rural districts ?

MR. MACLEOD :

It is quite possible that it may tend to lessen the comparative prevalence of blindness in towns.

REV. ST. CLARE HILL :

May I ask this—there are a very large number of blind people in England who do not appear in that census at all. If that is correct, I am afraid the census is not much help.

MR. MACLEOD :

I have no reason to suppose that blind persons to any appreciable extent escape enumeration.

A VOICE :

Does “totally blind” mean no perception of light whatever ?

MR. MACLEOD :

I presume so. People are simply asked to state if they are blind ; I have no means at present of going behind their answer. In Ireland there is a means of going behind that answer, because the constabulary who are in the pay of the Government are utilised for this purpose, and after the census returns are received make special enquiry as to the condition of those returned as blind. The result of this enquiry after the census of 1891 was to show that the number of persons found to be totally blind, was less than four-fifths of the number originally stated to be blind in the schedules. If the Conference feels that to hold a similar enquiry in this country would add materially to the value of this branch of the census, I think a representation to that effect should be made, and in 1911 we might endeavour to make such enquiries as would enable us to say more positively whether the people returned as blind are totally or only partially blind.

THE CHAIRMAN :

I would like to ask whether the census paper contains any definition of total blindness ?

MR. MACLEOD :

No.

A VOICE :

Are the figures of the census of 1901 on the same basis as the figures in the previous census ?

MR. MACLEOD :

There has been absolutely no change with regard to the Blind since 1891.

REV. ST. CLARE HILL (St. George's School) :

Mr. Chairman, I have not many words to say in reference to the paper before us on Statistics, but it does seem to me that it

would be most desirable for this Conference to record that it is not satisfied with the return made on the basis that we learn from the Registrar General. I gather, and I want to be sure I am right, that there are about thirty thousand people in England and Wales who are totally blind. I am sure that those who have anything whatever to do with blind people know that there is a larger number who ought to be under our instruction. In the Institution with which I am connected, I suppose I may say that 50 per cent., or perhaps more, are not what we should describe as *totally* blind. Some have a little vision, and it is a serious matter for us who have to deal with these people that we have only such information as will give us the totally blind. I would ask that this Conference should take some steps to ask for a recognised definition of blindness in the census, and a return showing the number of totally blind and the number of those who are defective.

MR. MACLEOD :

I should just like to say in concluding this discussion, that personally I should be pleased to take any amount of trouble to improve our statistical information regarding the Blind in any direction desired by the Conference, but one must remember that perfect accuracy is hardly to be expected in census returns. We already in some respects are considered to err in the effort to obtain too much, and when we endeavour to obtain too minute information we are in danger of defeating our purpose. Whatever can be done to meet the wishes of the Conference, I am sure those who take the census 10 years hence, whether I have any share in it or not, will be glad to do.

MR. PLATER :

Among the Blind I have met it is generally assumed that if a man has not sufficient sight to get a living he is practically blind, and I think that is a fair assumption.

MR. CARTER (Sheffield Institution) :

The Health Committee desired that the Medical Officer should draw up a memorandum pointing out the importance of attending to the eyes of newly-born children. This was printed and distributed amongst the Registrars of Births, Marriages and Deaths, with the request that when the birth of a child was registered, a copy of the leaflet might be handed over to the person registering the birth. I think that has been extremely useful.

THE CHAIRMAN :

I think we may now proceed to the discussion of Mr. Seton-Karr's paper, on which there are a number of speakers.

MR. CARTER (Sheffield Institution) :

I should like to say how entirely I am in sympathy with Mr. Seton-Karr's feeling that we ought not to gather the adult

Blind together in an Institution, superintended by officials and under strict regulations. I wish to explain to this Conference what we in Sheffield are endeavouring to do with regard to providing for the adult Blind who have become incapable of work. We found that a number of the people who for many years had worked at our factory had become incapable of performing their duties, and the difficulty was to know how to provide for them. There were three courses open to us, either to send them to the poor house, to give them a weekly annuity at their own homes, or to provide suitable accommodation for them in cottage dwellings. Now, we took the course of capitalising our legacies, and that enabled us to provide a fund to purchase land and to build cottage homes. We have a little block, in the centre of which are four tenement dwellings of two rooms each, which provide very comfortably indeed for a married couple or a single person. On either side is a cottage of four rooms, where better accommodation is provided, and we place them under very simple regulations. We do not admit any applicants who have been itinerant musicians. We do not admit the intermarried blind. We do admit a blind man who has a sighted wife, or *vice versa*, and we leave them to follow their own regular course, not placing them under restrictions that would perhaps be painful to them. But we do say that they shall not entertain lodgers, for we think if we permitted that, it might very soon lead to overcrowding, but we leave them at liberty to live a natural life as other people do.

REV. H. BRIGHT (North London Home):

Mr. Chairman, I have the honour, with my beloved wife, to be the founder and Hon. Superintendent of the North London Homes for Aged Christian Blind Men and Women. The largest, my friend the Secretary of Gardner's Trust says, in the United Kingdom—I had nearly said the first, and if I had done so it would have been on the authority of the late venerable the Right Hon. The Earl of Shaftesbury. Twenty-two years have been spent in close connection with that work. One hundred inmates are now with us, one hundred have passed to the land of unclouded vision.

It may interest the Conference if I give a brief description of the home life of these individuals. Mr. Sharpe told us that the Blind in Institutions were either morbid or morose, a view which I by no means share in the slightest degree. At half-past seven in the morning warm water is served to every inmate of the Home who desires it—although cleanliness is not godliness, it is decidedly a duty. At half-past eight breakfast is ready. At nine there is family worship in all the branches, and from nine to eleven, if you want to see a little bit of business, you might see the Blind engaged in making their beds and so forth, the

stronger helping the weaker. At eleven o'clock there come the visitors from the various churches in the neighbourhood, who by means of music, reading, conversation, &c., until a quarter to one engage the time and attention of the inmates of the Home. These visits numbered last year 2,132.

Mr. Seton-Karr's paper was very interesting, and we are exceedingly indebted to him for it, but there is one point which, to my mind, it has not touched—it is the great number of aged blind men and women who have no relatives, and who have no home of their own. I can only put my hand on one case out of one hundred where the friends could have the inmate back to live with them, and that individual, it seems to me according to his own story, is infinitely better off in the home than amongst his relatives. Be that as it may, there they are. I have only one word to add, and that is that they are not idle. They make the whole of the household linen, they do a great deal of knitting, and supply about £14 worth for the annual sale. Many of them mend their own clothing, and have no objection to making up little dresses for crippled children, or for the Ragged School children. They are not at all idle, nor have I heard in twenty-two years that anyone has complained of time hanging heavily. It does seem to me that whatever may be said about grouping the Blind together, that unless they have relatives who can and will take care of them, they are a great deal better off. We have 41 over 70 years of age, 13 over 80, and three over 90, for they live to a good old age—whether it is because they have pensions or not, I do not know. The Guardians pay about £400 a year for them, and we frequently receive requests from them to take inmates who require the comforts of a Christian home.;

MR. SETON-KARR :

I do not wish to undervalue the comforts to be obtained at such homes. I meant to infer that people would prefer a pension to a home. Pray do not let the assembly think I undervalue such homes as Mr. Bright has presided over for so many years.

MR. WILLIAM HARRIS (Leicester Association) :

I think I can in a few words give a little useful information respecting a "Cottage Home" for the Blind, which was commended in the Report of the Royal Commission on the Blind, the only one of its kind that I know. It is simply an ordinary small house in a side street near the centre of Leicester. The rent would be under £20 a year. It is under the care of a matron who is contented with an allowance of about £15 a year. I mention these facts that you may see it is not a grand or costly undertaking. It is carried on by the Institution for the Blind, which also has workshops and a home teaching branch. The

blind inmates are four respectable aged women, one had, I think, been a domestic servant, and the matron is not a grand lady, but a woman of the same position in life as the inmates. She and the blind inmates are selected by a committee of ladies who also have the management of the home teaching branch, and one or more of these ladies visit the cottage at least once a week. The expenses are small, but the results are great. There is much comfort, much happiness, and much blessing in that little cottage. The cheering visits of the ladies and other persons who go to see the inmates are much valued. The cottage is near the centre of the town, where it can easily be visited by the friends of the blind people. We do not approve of the isolation of the Blind, nor of collecting them together; there is only one cottage. It also has the advantage of being near various places of worship, so the Blind can go where they like; and they can easily get recreation at concerts, or amusements, or lectures, if they like to do so. I think I need not say more about it, but I wish you to understand that it is really what it is called, a "Cottage Home."

MR. JOHN R. BURNE (Henshaw's Asylum):

Mr. Chairman, first of all I congratulate the meeting on hearing such an able paper from Mr. Seton-Karr.

I would like to give you an account of what we do in Manchester. We do not give pensions—we dare not call them pensions—we grant allowances. Our scheme debars our Board from giving a pension as such. We are now getting up a new scheme enabling us to give pensions, but in the meantime we are giving grants to 133 people, amounting to nearly £1,000 a year. We give from 1/6 to 5/- a week, according to the circumstances of the individual. We require, as far as possible, the relatives of a poor blind person to contribute towards his keep. That is to say, in some cases, we say we will give you half-a-crown if your children will give you another, or in one case where we gave a woman 3/- a week we stipulated that there must be 1/- a week passed into my hands by her relatives. In this case we found the people willing enough to do this. We have a visitor appointed by the Board to enquire into the circumstances and requirements of indigent blind persons. This information is brought before a committee, the case is thoroughly gone into, and the adjudication of that committee is in every respect reliable. Then we have, independent of the visitor, a paid servant of the Board who goes round and visits the poor people, and he sees from week to week the character of the household and the character of the person who receives. I think I may say that out of 135 persons who passed through our hands in that way, there have been only two cases that we have had to strike off the books because of the character of the people after the grant was first made. I would like to hear from some speaker a suggestion with regard to the

medical examination of the Blind. In the United Kingdom, semi-blind men or women unable to earn a living we take to be blind, and we relieve them, but I am afraid in some cases if they were brought before a duly qualified medical practitioner, they would be found curable.

MRS. R. B. PIM, (Belfast Home for the Blind) :

Mr. Chairman, someone has said this is an age of statistics, which must be my apology for using them to illustrate how God has blessed and owned home mission work among the Blind of Belfast ; indeed I may say of Ireland, as the home inmates are gathered from all parts of the country. The first year of its existence our income was £27, the past year, which is its 16th year, our income was £750.

The mission work is carried on by systematic visitation by voluntary and paid workers in the homes of the Blind scattered throughout the city, by relief of need when necessary, and by teaching those to read who have lost their sight in later life. The mission workers in its early years found the need of a home for those who had no person to look after them, and consequently a very modest beginning was made, a house was taken at the rent of 4/6 per week. To-day we have two homes—one for women, in which there are 25 inmates, and one for men, in which there are 14. The men are employed at the workshops for the Blind, which are situated about a mile from the home, the walk night and morning proving most enjoyable and beneficial to those whose employment requires them to sit all day. In the women's home all are busy, those of the stronger ones doing house work, and the others knitting, sewing, or basket making.

In connection with our home I would like to say the only known rule is "BY LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER," and under that I need hardly say that friction of any kind is unknown ; all work together in peace and harmony. In Ireland we have no Gardner's Trust or Indigent Blind Relief Fund, but we have, thank God, many kind and enthusiastic followers of Him, who when on earth made the Blind His special care, and He has supplied all our need, and we feel that while we praise Him for all that is past, we can trust Him for all that is to come.

MRS. HENRY LEE :

Mr. Chairman, I feel very strongly indeed on the subject of the aged Blind, because my dear husband, who was a well-known London Surgeon, became suddenly blind during the night, a few months before he passed away. If you will allow me, I should like very much to impress upon this Conference the need, the great and pressing need as it seems to me, of establishing a number of Cottage Homes for blind people over the age of 60 years. I am sure we all appreciate to the full the good work done by the various Institutions, but it does seem to me that

however carefully managed an Institution may be, the necessary rules must be very irksome to old people.

Now what we want for these poor men and women who have nobody to look after them, is a number of small homes, with home ties. We do not want the last years of their lives to be rendered wearisome by rules and regulations, but we wish them to feel that in their declining days they are really living in peace and happiness. It seems to me that if this could be brought about, it would be an inestimable blessing to many. It ought not to be a difficult thing to establish such homes in various parts of the country, and get people near to take a personal interest in the inmates; for instance, the young people of the neighbourhood might be glad to visit and entertain them by giving them musical evenings and so on. Surely, by taking a practical interest in their everyday welfare, we shall best teach them to realize the living presence of our blessed Saviour, and to appreciate His real and true sympathy with the needs of the Blind.

I thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for giving me the opportunity of saying these few words, and I shall be very glad if I can in any way help in putting forward such a scheme.

REV. ST. CLARE HILL (St. George's School):

I wish to ask two questions, which perhaps Mr. Wilson will kindly answer. The one with reference to pensions. We are most anxious to get some Organisation to see that the various pensions fall into the right hands. Could not such a thing be organised by Gardner's Trust? It seems to me we could not do better.

The other question is this—I hold in my hand the Annual Charity register. Would it not be a good thing if we could get recorded in that book the various Institutions that are ready to do anything for the Blind? Let me just tell you, in reference to Homes for the Blind, that there is a statement of one home for men and women, none for men, and two for women. There are many more homes, however. Could not the Gardner's Trust take some steps so that we can get them into the Register?

MR. H. J. WILSON:

Mr. Chairman, I am quite in accord with the paper read by Mr. Seton-Karr. It shows the principles upon which the Gardner's Trust is worked, and I believe they are thoroughly sound. The only reason why I rise is that a very important matter indeed has escaped the notice of the Conference. We are in the face of a great difficulty in regard to the pensions of the future. Yesterday you remember we discussed the subject of assisting those over the age of 16, and it was pointed out that the Guardians had the power to assist those over school age. The Gardner's Trust assisted 168 children over the age of 16 last year, but they are only touching the fringe of a very large subject

that really belongs to the State to deal with. A deputation approached the Duke of Devonshire a few years ago with a view to raise the school age from 16 to 18, but His Grace replied that if we only applied to the Guardians, we could get the necessary relief. Now, here is the difficulty. We who are interested in the Blind are recommending these children to get relief from the Guardians, and yet there are Societies which make it a condition that no blind person who has ever received parish relief shall receive any benefit. Are we not ourselves rendering them ineligible for relief by Hetherington's and other large Charities for the Blind? I do not know whether there are any representatives from Hetherington's here to-day, but if there are, I should like to suggest most earnestly to them that they revise their rules, and when persons have received parish relief *for educational purposes only*, it should not render them ineligible.

Mr. St. Clare Hill has asked two questions. One was about making enquiries into the circumstances of the Blind. The Gardner's Trust has never had much difficulty in this respect. Districts in London are mapped out by the Charity Organization Society; they readily give information and we employ them very frequently. I am constantly receiving letters from one or other of the Branches, asking for, or giving, information. I see no difficulty at all in getting at the bottom of the cases in London. As regards the country it is different, because there are few towns with Charity Organization Society Branches, although they are extending, but in cases in the country, application is made either to the Vicar of the parish or to other ministers of Religion, or to the Guardians of the poor, and generally information can be got in some way.

In regard to the other point raised by Mr. St. Clare Hill, he seems to think that nothing has been said about the Blind in the Charity Organization Register. I am surprised to hear this, as at Mr. Loch's request I wrote the preface to this section. [Mr. Hill explained that he was referring to Homes.] I did not see all that was said with regard to Homes or Pension Societies, or Institutions, before I wrote the preface, but I may say that some years ago all the information in regard to the Blind given in the Register was drawn up by me, and although I am not responsible for that part of it now, at that time every Home then in existence was mentioned in the Register, and I have no reason for supposing they are not there now, although I have not yet seen this year's edition.

MR. ST. CLARE HILL:

Could you not be made responsible for information about the Blind in the Register?

MR. WILSON:

No, I am afraid not.

HOME TEACHING SOCIETIES FOR THE BLIND.

BY MISS E. M. BAINBRIGGE,

Secretary to the Home Teaching Society for the Blind, London.

In the year 1855 the late Miss Graham, of Clapham, moved with pity for the sad condition of the Blind of London, devised a plan for cheering and assisting them, which has proved of untold good, not only in the Metropolis and its suburbs, but in all our great centres of population, in remote country districts, and in some of our most distant Colonies, as well as in the United States of America.

She began by collecting enough money to buy a few embossed books and to pay the wages of one teacher, whose duty it was to find out and instruct in the art of reading by touch as many blind men, women and children as possible.

The work commended itself to the charitable. Similar associations were formed elsewhere, workshops followed as the need for them was revealed. Teacher after teacher was added to the London staff, several of whom were sent by request for a time to start work in provincial centres. Of late years it has been deemed better for local Committees to engage as teachers blind residents acquainted with the districts in which they are to work, but the Committee of the parent Society are always ready to help with advice anyone who is starting a Home Teaching Society, and they are sometimes able to lend volumes of Moon books and Braille magazines, which prove useful until a local library has been collected.

Of the 58 salaried teachers now employed in England and Wales, 45 are male and 13 female, 48 are blind or nearly so, and 10 can see. A great deal of visiting is done by voluntary workers. Our 14 London teachers are all blind. My Committee feel that, in spite of the extra expense entailed by the need for guides, the interesting occupation of teaching reading and writing should be reserved for those who are blind, or very nearly so, and our subscribers like to feel that their money helps the Blind twice over.

It should also not be forgotten that the sympathy and the example of one who has passed through the agonising trial of loss of sight is of immense help to his pupils. A tale told me by Mr. Prescott, a blind teacher from Australia, well illustrates the feeling of the newly-blind. He had heard of a man in the bush who had lately lost his sight. On reaching the hut and asking for him, the man's wife said he would never let anyone come near him. "Tell him that I am blind," said Mr. Prescott. The

woman went in, and he heard at first the gruff rejection of a visitor. "But he is blind too," said the wife. "What! blind like me? Oh, let him come in, then," was the cry. He went in, and to the wife's amazement her husband listened to the comforting words of his fellow-sufferer, and before long learnt to read, and otherwise to occupy himself, and became a useful and contented man.

Great care should be taken in choosing teachers. They must be fairly strong, as they have heavy bags to carry and long walks to take. They must be good readers and have the gift of explaining themselves clearly, and above all they should be conscientious and truly religious—not given to the use of cant phrases, but men or women with a high ideal, who will bear patiently with the irritable, comfort the desponding and rouse the idle, and who, living in close communion with God will have power to uplift others, the Seeing as well as the Blind, for our teachers often penetrate into places where no other messenger of the Gospel is received.

The work of a teacher is of a most varied character, usually beginning with hints as to how a blind man may best learn to find his way about the house. In large towns where there are workshops he is not generally supposed to give lessons in trades, but he often does teach chair-caning and knitting.

Many provincial societies combine the function of relief with that of teaching. The London Home Teaching Society does not give relief out of its own funds, but a very important part of the business of its agents is to put deserving people in the way of obtaining those particular pensions for which they are eligible, and to bring special cases of distress to the notice of their local Superintendent and to that of the Clergy or the Charity Organisation Society. They insist on children being sent to board school centres, or help to get them into boarding schools, do all they can to keep young men and women from becoming beggars by assisting them to get into workshops, and put those who are too old to learn a trade in communication with Mr. Düstow, the manager of the Blind Tea Agency, at 5, Fen Court, E.C. To hundreds of the most respectable among the Blind that agency has opened the only possible door of hope. Mr. Düstow was formerly connected with this society, and then learnt how sore was the need of those on whom blindness falls after the age of 30 and before 50, when it becomes easier to get pensions. I should advise the managers of country societies to apply to him for information concerning his agency.

We put a liberal interpretation on the word "Home" in our title. Fortnightly visits are paid to workshops, to workhouses and infirmaries. Out of the 1,830 persons on our registers in 1901, 443 were pauper inmates, and our teachers and their books

do much to cheer lives which must be sadly monotonous, even in the best managed wards.

The Colney Hatch Lunatic Asylum is also visited once a month, by the express desire of the authorities, and I think provincial committees, who do in many places already care for inmates of workhouses, should enquire whether help is wanted in their county asylums and, if possible, supply the need by occasionally sending a teacher and providing embossed books on loan, for which a subscription might be asked.

The organization of home teaching work and the distribution of books in country districts, present special difficulties, and people are often apt to say that there are not enough Blind to make it worth while to employ a teacher. There are several ways in which this difficulty can be met. One is to employ a teacher for part of his time only, paying him by the head for those to whom he gives instruction and lends books. Another, adopted in more populous districts, is to place a teacher in the largest town, and send him about in the surrounding districts on certain days in a month. A third plan is to send teachers from place to place for certain portions of the year. Cornwall, for instance, has 14 stations in which classes are held, and visits paid by a teacher for several weeks or months in each year. Some of these stations have permanent libraries, but our work everywhere in country districts would be greatly facilitated if the example of Canada or Australia were followed, and all literature embossed for the Blind were conveyed post or rail free. We think, too, that blind teachers with their guides should be allowed to travel by rail at reduced rates.

The Scotch have a very complete system, whereby what are called the "Out-door blind" are looked after. There are 10 affiliated Societies, and the Union covers the whole of Scotland, including the Orkney and Shetland Islands and the Hebrides. Three thousand four hundred and sixty eight persons were under visitation last year, among whom 1,423 had learnt to read. Twenty-three male teachers are employed wholly or for part of the year, and three females, of these 19 can see.

Ireland is not so well provided for, but her people generally are not so fond of books as the Scotch. There are Blind Associations in Dublin and Belfast, both of which employ home teachers. One hundred and twenty people are visited in Belfast, among whom are 50 readers. About 20 are returned as under visitation in Dublin, among whom are 8 readers. There is probably more work done which has not been reported to me.

Miss Graham believed firmly in the merits of Moon's type, which for many years held the field in England, owing to its extreme simplicity; and her society by its original constitution was pledged to "distribute Moon's type exclusively." This

exclusiveness. was at first productive of good ; it checked the multiplication of fancy types. Probably few are now aware that there were at least 23 embossed types struggling for the mastery during the first half of the 19th century, and a great deal of energy and money was wasted in bringing out books which could only be used by a few readers.

But when the Braille type was brought from France, and its supreme advantages for the young and intelligent became gradually apparent, some of the provincial Home Teaching societies, not being hampered by any exclusive clause, eagerly adopted the new system in addition to the old, while the Central Society faithfully adhered to Moon. Instruction in Braille reading and writing was meanwhile, and still is, given at classes organised under the late Dr. Armitage, by the almoners of the Indigent Blind Visiting Society, and others.

At last in 1895 the situation became no longer tenable, our London teachers protested strongly, and with the cordial approval of subscribers, and of Miss Moon herself, the exclusive clause was abrogated, and Braille books were added to the libraries.

Having myself strongly advised the introduction of the Braille system, and having been enabled in less than seven years, with the assistance of Gardner's Trust, and the devoted ladies who transcribe books for us, to circulate among the blind of London more than 800 Braille volumes of recent works of history, biography, science, travel, and fiction, perhaps I may venture to offer an impartial opinion on the question of types. I feel sure that many friends of the blind make a great mistake when they assume that because Braille is infinitely the best of existing embossed types for educational purposes, and for cultivated literary tastes, therefore no other type is needed. We might as well say that because chess is the finest of games for the intellectual, therefore 'ping-pong' is not a good game!

There are hundreds of blind folk who cannot learn Braille, try how they will, hundreds more who will not try. Their fingers are too hard, or their brains are not sharp enough to make out the signs and contractions, which are of such value to the young and the well-educated. The failure of memory, common to the old, is not sufficiently considered in this controversy. The difficulty is often more mental than physical. Yet these poor people find unending comfort and amusement in spelling out chapter after chapter from Moon's books. They often say that they don't know how they could live without them. Our oldest pupil, a cultivated gentleman aged 93, dictated a letter to me in which he said "without books life would be a misery." He had previously tried in vain to learn Braille. He read 27 volumes in nine months.

Therefore although we should provide as many Braille

books as we possibly can for the young and middle-aged, I hold that no Society for ministering to the Blind in their own homes is doing its work completely unless it encourages the old to learn Moon's type. It is absurd to say, as some do, that it is only necessary to send them an alphabet and that they can get books from a library. Of course they *can* teach themselves, but more often than not they need some coaxing before they will begin, (one of our best readers took six years to make up his mind to begin) and fetching books from a library is often a great trouble to them.

The London teachers are always telling me that in spite of the increasing numbers of Braille readers the demand for Moon books increases too, because owing to the general spread of education old people care so much more for reading than did the former generation.

We have 1,056 readers on our London registers; of these 565—rather more than half—can read Moon's type *only*. Doubtless many of the latter will eventually learn Braille, but the proportion of Moon readers will very likely now remain much the same, partly because as old-age creeps on, some Braille readers to my certain knowledge are forced to relapse upon Moon's type, and partly because it is taught to newly-blind adults, as our teachers unite in saying that pupils who have learnt the simple type first are much less easily daunted by the difficulties of Braille.

To show that London is not behind the age now, I may mention that in several large towns the proportion of Moon readers is very much higher than it is here, three-quarters instead of half knowing that type only.

I sent out enquiry papers to all the Home Teaching Societies known to me, and the Managers of 38 in England and Wales were kind enough to answer them.

Five thousand and fifty eight persons are returned as under visitation, regular or occasional, according to varying circumstances—2,450 are returned as readers and 1,054 as readers of Moon's type only, but I could not learn the number of those who could read Moon only among the 160 Cornish readers. The figures given do not generally include people who are employed at workshops, and who get their books from their own Institution libraries. Among such, Braille readers would certainly preponderate, but many of them after working hard all day do not care to read at all.

Coming to the relative numbers of books in each type belonging to provincial Home Teaching Libraries, we find Moon greatly in excess of Braille, but this is partly because the managers of these libraries have wisely adopted the plan of subscribing to the National Blind Lending Library, and thus

procure a constant, though still quite inadequate, supply of fresh Braille books, instead of increasing their permanent stock.

Our London teachers have each about 400 Moon volumes and the excellent quarterly magazine called "Dawn."

The Braille volumes, of which we have nearly enough to allow two a fortnight to each Braille reader on our list, are passed from district to district. We bind them at my office, they are brought back there for exchange by the teachers, and seldom lie idle. Besides these, we have 25 copies of magazines every month.

The scheme which is on foot to accumulate embossed books at each Municipal Free Library seems costly and unsatisfactory. Very much more use could be made of the money spent if the municipal authorities would subscribe to Home Teaching Societies, as Boards of Guardians already do, or would make grants for books which, if distributed on the plan we have adopted, and exchanged free of charge at the homes of all who need them, would not cumber the shelves of public buildings, but be a means of education and a continual solace to boys and girls who have just left school, to strong men doomed to idleness because blindness has befallen them when too old to learn a new trade, to invalids, and to the aged, whose embossed books are their only joy.

MR. STAINSBY (Birmingham Institution):

Mr. Chairman, I am intensely interested in this question of Home Teaching Societies. In connection with our work for the Blind at Birmingham we have an Adult Blind Home Teaching Branch, with 400 members and two blind visitors—one male and one female. It is the least known of all the departments of our work, because it is carried on, not in any palatial building, but in the homes of the poor, infirm and aged blind. But of this I am convinced, that no part of our work is more owned and blessed of God than this department, as the constant stream of grateful letters I receive from members shows. I hope and pray that our devoted self-denying visitors, and those working in other parts of the country, may receive a rich blessing, for no workers in the cause of the Blind meet with so many difficulties or see so much suffering and distress as do our visiting teachers. In our schools and workshops we have every modern appliance and device to assist our teachers—and rightly so—but what of the home teacher? He must go from door to door in rain and snow as well as sunshine, carrying his apparatus in his hand, and make a schoolroom of each home he visits. His duties consist in teaching the Blind to read, lending them books, relieving those in distress, and generally assisting them in every way within his power. Through his kind help most of the pensions are procured. He acts as Medical Missionary by dis-

tributing hospital and dispensary notes. God bless him and his work !

The discussion on Miss Bainbrigge's paper affords me a fitting opportunity of saying how valuable is the Moon type to the aged and infirm blind. Everyone here knows that I am not biased in favour of the Moon type, or I should not have taken such an active part in the extension of Braille into shorthand, but I do say, from a *real knowledge*, and not from theory, that it is absolutely useless to attempt to teach Braille *in any form* to the vast majority of the aged blind. Those who advocate it are deplorably ignorant of the real condition of things. Of course Braille books are circulated amongst those who can read them, but what shall be done with a person of 50, 60, 70 or 80 years of age who loses his sight at any of these ages? In the first place, he will not be able to commit to memory the multitudinous contractions of the Braille System, which are absolutely necessary if he is to read the Braille books, and why should we expect him to do it, when in the sighted literature he formerly read there was not a single contraction, but every common and oft-repeated word, such as "an," "the," "but," &c., was printed in full? In the second place, there is absolutely nothing in the arbitrary Braille signs to associate the letters with those he was formerly familiar with in the days when he had his sight. Not so with the Moon type. It was one of the ideas of the honoured Dr. Moon—and a grand one it was—to form his letters as nearly like those of the ordinary type for the seeing as possible. This, and the omission of contractions (with but few exceptions), has made his type so popular with the aged. Let me here remind you that in America the Roman characters in a modified form are still embossed, and I believe there is a growing tendency to extend the system. If there are here any adult blind visitors who, from their own personal love of the Braille System, are unduly forcing it upon their pupils, let me implore them not to do so. Our two blind visitors at Birmingham are readers of the Braille as well as the Moon type, but they confess, and very frankly, that their work would be terribly hindered, and the readers of embossed literature enormously lessened, were Moon's literature to be withdrawn from circulation.

MR. JOSEPH HALL (Swansea Institution):

Mr. Chairman, I am at a loss to express the interest with which I listened to the admirable paper we have just heard. My object is to tell you what I have ascertained by looking through the Report of the Home Teaching Society for the Blind and the admirable book published by Gardner's Trust, and prepared by Mr. Wilson. There are no less than twelve Institutions and workshops for the Blind, which have been established in different parts of England and Wales by means of this Home Teaching

Society, after meetings held by the Society at the respective towns. It is simply wonderful to think what has been done in the initiative way by this admirable society. I remember many years ago, in the year 1865, attending a meeting of the Home Teaching Society in Swansea, and that was the beginning of the work which has been done in that part of Wales, and I was then very much struck with the necessity of the Blind being visited at their own homes. The result was that we first started a Workshop for the Blind, a small one, then moved to a larger one, and eventually an Institution was established. I remember also that there was a meeting at Cardiff in the same year (1865), and shortly after Workshops were established there. At Newport, which is twelve miles from Cardiff, they have not done that, but they have continued a very admirable work in visiting the Blind and helping them in many ways. I do feel that we owe a great debt of gratitude to this Society, which has been the means, directly or indirectly, of establishing so many Institutions and Workshops for the benefit of the Blind.

MR. JOHN BEATTIE (Ulster Society for the Deaf and Blind):

I am indebted to the last speaker, as well as to the Registrar-General, for some remarks made this morning in reference to the Blind in Ireland. It may not be known to every member of this assembly that, while in England you have had an Act of Parliament in operation since 1893, we in Ireland have had no Act at all. We have been wholly left out in these matters. Why this is so we cannot very well tell: we do not see any sufficient reason. We stand, as it were, on quite different ground from that on which you stand, in matters relating to the education of the Blind as well as that of the Deaf. The Governors of the Institution with which I have the honour to be connected have again and again approached the authorities on this matter, but I am sorry to say without any effect so far. I had the privilege of speaking at a Conference of the National Association of Teachers of the Deaf, where they passed a resolution and sent it to the proper authorities, but I have heard nothing of the result as yet. You seem to have crossed the Jordan, while we are still in the wilderness. How long we shall wander about there I cannot tell. Perhaps the Government think that the humane sentiments and the benevolent characteristics of Ireland are of such a strong and exuberant growth that the education of the Blind in that country may be safely left to their operation; or, perhaps, it is because we have so many grievances there, that one more or less does not matter. Let me say this morning that I think it is time the Government did something for our Blind in this respect. The neglect is becoming unendurable. We say that while there is life there is hope, and though we hope something creditable is now being done by voluntary efforts—you have heard of that

this morning already—we shall still look to the Government to take up this work as an educational duty of the State. It is my firm conviction that the education of these classes in Ireland (I speak of the Deaf as well as the Blind) has passed the stage when it should be wholly relegated to charitable agencies. I believe it should be taken up as a duty by the State, and we wish that such an assembly as this might bring influence to bear on the authorities. We know we have the sympathy, and we should be very glad to focus the influence of such an assembly as this to prevail upon the Government to do something for our Blind and Deaf. We wish very much, where possible, here or in our own country, to move the educational authorities to take up this question and give us as liberal terms as they have given on this side of the water.

MISS MOON :

When my father came to see how many characters he had arranged for, he found there were only nine, and the whole of the system has been carried out with nine characters.

MR. JOHN TENNANT (Indigent Blind Visiting Society) :

I should like to say a few words about Miss Bainbrigge's admirable paper. I should like to dot one or two of her "I's" and cross her "T's." There are still provincial towns where the visitors to the Blind in their own homes are sighted people, because it is impossible to convince sighted supporters of the advantages of Blind visitors. I should like to bear very emphatic testimony to the value of Blind visitation. A man having gone through the same deep waters speaks with a power and influence that nobody else can do. Since Dr. Armitage joined the Committee, some 30 years ago, the Indigent Blind Visiting Society has employed only Blind visitors, and I can confirm most strongly all that Miss Bainbrigge has said. The Indigent Blind Visiting Society, supported and helped largely by Dr. Armitage, who introduced the Braille, still uses the Moon as well as the Braille type, and finds it absolutely necessary.

Referring to one or two other points, I should just like to say how much, from my own experience, I value the class work. Blind people are capable, and thoroughly capable of intercourse with one another. It is therefore to their advantage to bring them together; I do not say to put them together in Institutions, but it is very advantageous to bring them together on occasions, for social conversation and for class work. I should like to illustrate that. To a sighted person coming to a large class of blind people it is rather depressing. The first thing he thinks is "what a sad sight," and he is struck with pity, but that is not at all the feeling of the Blind themselves. Then again they say, "We never knew that blind people could be so happy—we did not know that there was so much cheerfulness." I assure you

that our visitors have been told: "When I came to your class I was so depressed that I was contemplating suicide, but I said, if these people can be so happy, why cannot I." Such experiences have been the turning-point in many a life.

May I also say with reference to what Mr. Stainsby (who has given us so many valuable hints) said, that a blind person of experience visiting among the Blind and constantly engaged in looking after their welfare, gets a greater insight into their difficulties and trials; and in innumerable cases that we could quote, a little suggestion from one of our visitors made all the difference in a man's happiness. Mr. Mead, our own Superintendent (himself blind), had a very interesting experience. He came across a blind man who said: "What can I do to earn my living, I was a carpenter, and am now unable to earn a shilling?" Mr. Mead advised him to stick to his old trade, and he is now an efficient blind joiner. Quite recently he has made an operating table for the Ophthalmic Hospital, elaborately fitted up, which has, I believe, been thoroughly satisfactory.

Employment for the Blind is an indefinite thing, and each individual case wants taking on its merits. The sympathy of a blind man of cleverness and resource is of immense value in this matter.

MISS BAINBRIGGE:

I certainly mentioned that there were 10 Provincial Societies to my knowledge who employ sighted teachers.

MR. SETON-KARR:

With regard to misplaced pity. Mr. Fawcett, I remember, used these words: "We do not want your pity; we are not your equals, we are your superiors."

MR. WILLIAM DAY (Blackburn Home Teaching Society):

Mr. Chairman, there are just one or two remarks I should like to make. The first is that the Provincial Societies are no doubt indebted to the London Home Teaching Society for their inception in many instances, but I doubt for various reasons whether the London Home Teaching Society will do much more towards starting Societies in the provinces, and as there is only about half the ground covered in England (I think Scotland can claim to have covered the whole of the Blind as far as home visitation is concerned), there ought to be in every census group of Counties, an Association of Blind Visiting Societies, so that certain members of their Committees could meet annually, and that one of the objects of such an Association should be to cover the vacant ground. New Societies should be formed, or the boundaries of existing Societies should be increased.

Then there is another point I should bring forward. It is not from any laziness of my own, because according to the

figures of the Registrar General, in Blackburn we have more on the books than we ought to have, it is therefore from no laziness, or because I want someone else to do the work, but the thing is this; in a large manufacturing town like Blackburn, with a population of 140,000, it is like hunting for a needle in a haystack to bring in fresh cases when persons go blind. I applied to the Hospital authorities, especially the special Hospitals, not only in Blackburn but in other places, to oblige me with the names and addresses of their patients, and I have even offered to send somebody to copy the list, but I have always been refused. The very source from which we could get the information so that the Blind may be visited is denied, and I do hope that some influential recommendation will be made to these authorities, that they will take a more elastic view of the matter. They call it a "privileged communication." I cannot see why the names and addresses of people can be privileged in any way.

I was very glad to hear what Mr. Stainsby said. He thoroughly emphasised what I said yesterday. It is not what *can* be taught, it is what the people will learn. Although I am as strong an advocate of the Braille type as anybody, yet I never thrust it upon people. I think some Blind Visiting Societies make a great mistake in this respect. Why should they compel people to read? If they want to learn, teach them; if not, leave them alone.

MR. FREDERICK MOORE (Hull Institution):

I have listened with much interest to Miss Bainbrigg's paper, and I fully endorse what she said and also what Mr. Stainsby said, but there are one or two points which I should like to speak about. Our main desire is to find employment for the Blind. In England, I find from Miss Bainbrigg's paper, there are 45 blind visitors and ten sighted. That should not be, in my opinion. The Committees of these Institutions should look into the matter, and see if they cannot employ more capable blind people who can do this visiting. Then I come to Scotland. I am aware it would be perfectly impossible for blind visitors to go to the Orkney and Shetland Isles, but in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and many other large towns, certainly more than four blind visitors should be employed. This should be looked into by those who are anxious to help the Blind.

I am of this opinion as regards Moon's type—that you will never do away with it. It has got such a hold on the affections of the readers that they certainly prefer it. When I ask them which they prefer to learn, they invariably decide in favour of Moon. Of course, many of these older blind people could not read when they had their sight, or, if they learned the letters, could not put the words together. People wonder sometimes why there are not more readers.

As regards Municipal authorities providing literature for the Blind, the Hull Corporation during the last three years have made us a grant of £10 10s. annually, for the purpose of purchasing the latest publications. These books are only loaned to us. Our Blind prefer to have the books taken to their houses, rather than fetching them from the library. And we are indebted, like others, to the Home Teaching Society in London for having started this useful branch of work amongst our Blind.

A few years ago a small workshop was started in Hull, now it has developed, and employs between 30 and 40.

We also have a Home for Blind Women, which is now full. A fee is paid by their friends or Guardians, and what they earn goes for their clothing.

There is one other point I should like to mention, that if one or two members of the Committee would make an occasional visit, once in a year we will say, to the homes of the Blind, to see for themselves their condition, their views would be considerably affected. They would then see what extreme poverty exists, and under what difficulties many of our Blind have to live. Again, I have this privilege, that when I find anyone extremely necessitous, I can give them a grocery order to the value of five shillings without asking the Committee. We have four medical gentlemen who gratuitously supply medicine and attendance, and on presentation of a doctor's certificate the Blind can obtain sick relief in the shape of money, and many are sent every year to Convalescent Homes at the seaside, and assisted from time to time in many other ways.

MR. WILLIAM MEAD (Indigent Blind Visiting Society):

Mr. Chairman, I am aware that time is advancing, and shall say very little, but I do want to call attention to this one fact, that the supply of books by the Home Teaching Society meets, to a very large extent, the needs of the Blind in the matter of reading, and that the recent movements in relation to libraries need a very great deal more thought and care than has been given to them. The Blind, according to the very nature of things, are not likely to leave their homes to go to libraries when they can be supplied at home without being at the expense of paying for a guide. I think it is a splendid thing that there should be an Institution which keeps a number of blind persons at work in this way. Five hundred volumes of books were given by the late Sir Charles Lowther to the People's Palace, London. Those 500 volumes, in Moon's type, occupied a great deal of space, to the great distress of the Secretary and officials. Year after year I applied for the use of those books for the classes of the Indigent Blind Visiting Society, but was told that the books could not be removed because of the conditions on which they were given. I enquired whether the Blind came to read them,

and found that not more than eight blind persons had been to the library. My suggestion is, that the Secretary of the Home Teaching Society should get into touch with all the existing libraries, and do the very utmost that can be done to get the blind home teacher into connection with the same, so that he may give information and help, and perhaps the Home Teaching Society might be the better off in its subscription list if that arrangement could be brought about.

THURSDAY, APRIL 24th (Afternoon).

MRS. HENRY FAWCETT took the chair at 2 p.m., and said:—
Ladies and gentlemen, in opening the proceedings, I will first call upon Mr. Wilson to make a few announcements.

MR. H. J. WILSON:

I have very few announcements to make this afternoon. One is in regard to Dr. Hartley, who was to have read a paper on "The Inter-marriage of Blind Persons," but I am sorry to say he is very seriously ill, and has not been able to sufficiently prepare it for me to read. Dr. Rockliffe has kindly consented to introduce the subject with a few words.

The next question is in regard to the Committees that I alluded to this morning. I want the names of those who are proposed as members sent up to me now, as we shall have to vote if there are more people nominated than there are vacancies.

There is the Committee of five on the "Defective" Blind. Mr. Loch (the Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society) is one, and a representative of the Gardner's Trust another; the Conference has to fill the three vacancies.

The other Committee is one to consider the question of Uniform Braille. As I said this morning, it is recommended that there should be a Committee of seven, consisting of Mr. Illingworth, Dr. Campbell, Dr. Ranger, a representative of the Board of Education, and a representative of the Bible Society; two, therefore, have to be elected by the Conference.

There is another Committee which I did not mention this morning, and that is one, of five or seven members, to organise the next Conference in two or three years. I shall be glad to receive names for forming this Committee.

I have nothing more to add, except that the names suggested for the Committees should be sent up at once.

MRS. FAWCETT:

I am here this afternoon not in any sense of the word to teach, but to learn. I do not intend to obtrude between you and the papers which are about to be read with any lengthy

discourse or address, but to testify my very great interest in the welfare of the Blind, and to say how important and desirable I think such Conferences as these are, both to prevent overlapping on the part of the various societies and organisations, and also to bring into contact with one another those who have spent many years of their lives in studying the Blind, so that they may benefit by each other's experience, and learn what has been done in various parts of the country. It is a very good thing for those who are blind themselves to meet together, in order to hear what blind people are doing in different ways. I have known, in the course of my life, a good many blind men and women—some of the most distinguished in our country—and I believe that nothing has given greater encouragement and greater help to those who have had the misfortune to lose their sight than to hear of some of the splendid achievements by others who have had a similar misfortune. Especially at the outset, a man or woman finds the misfortune very hard to endure, and it is an immense help to him or her in triumphing over the affliction which they have been called upon to bear, to hear what others have done. I have in my mind this afternoon one of our officers in South Africa, who lost his sight there. I have heard little about him besides what has appeared in the papers, but I think in all probability it would be a very great help to him if he could know how much has been accomplished by other blind men and women; and I am sure if any of you have the opportunity of coming across him socially, you will let him know how much has been done by blind people to raise the whole status of the Blind in this country and in many other European countries. I heard of this gentleman a few days ago, through one of his nurses in the hospital, and she spoke of his patience and courage in his affliction, and when he received a telegram from Her Majesty the late Queen, he said, "I can't think what made her send it." The modesty and courage which have so distinguished him may, I hope, lead him to become one of our most valued blind friends.

I will now call upon the reader of the first paper, a member of the Committee of the Bradford Institution for the Blind.

MR. TATE (Bradford Institution):

Perhaps before reading my paper you will pardon a word or two of personal explanation. I labour under the disadvantage of having been absent from the Conference on Tuesday and Wednesday, and so I have not had the privilege of hearing matters that were then discussed. It may be, therefore, that I am repeating some ideas that have already been made familiar at the Conference. I would assure you that it has been a matter of very great regret for me to be absent from the Conference, but I had the misfortune to contract an attack of influenza, from which I am only just recovering.

**GREATER SOLIDARITY AND INTERCHANGE
OF OPINION AMONG INSTITUTIONS;
THE NEED OF A CENTRAL BUREAU; AND
UNIFORM PLAN OF KEEPING ACCOUNTS.**

BY W. H. TATE, ESQ.,

A Member of the Committee of the Bradford Institution for the Blind.

The Royal Commission of 1889, in bringing to a close its valuable labours on behalf of the Blind, made the following, as one of the closing suggestions:—

We think "That there should be greater solidarity among the institutions, and interchange of information and opinion between them, so that they should work harmoniously together."

The importance and value of this suggestion has been realized in some measure by all those having practical acquaintance with the management of institutions, but for the most part their energies have been concentrated upon the development of the special work with which they were personally connected, and there has been little opportunity for promoting any scheme for systematic interchange of opinion amongst institutions generally.

It is gratifying to note, however, the much greater interest which many of the institutions now manifest in each other's welfare, and the readiness with which they co-operate to further the interests of the Blind. Doubtless, the visits of managers and deputations making tours of inspection, for the purpose of seeing what other institutions were doing, have greatly helped to bring about this state of affairs, and to promote the spirit of mutual helpfulness and good-will which now exists.

The interchange of opinion thus obtained, although of limited extent, has been of considerable advantage to the institutions concerned, and has distinctly tended to advance the character and efficiency of their work. It may, therefore, be anticipated with confidence, that the arrangement of systematic opportunities for consultation and discussion of the various matters relating to institution life and work, will be attended by most beneficial results, and will encourage and stimulate to renewed zeal and devotion, those responsible for their management.

The recent alterations and extensions at some of the older institutions, and the opening of new workshops at other centres, are gratifying indications of the general desire to make further provision for the needs of the Blind.

Notwithstanding these developments, however, and in spite of all efforts to use wisely, efficiently and economically, the funds provided by the charitable, there is yet a great deficiency of

accommodation. Most of the institutions represented at this Conference are continually receiving applications from persons anxious to be taught a trade, or to be otherwise received into the institutions, for whom no provision can be made. The number of institutions, and especially of "workshops," is not nearly sufficient, if the needs of the Blind are to be fully met. It would appear that only a limited number of blind persons are gifted with the requisite energy, resourcefulness and enterprise, which will enable them to make headway alone, and the provision of more workshops would seem to be one of the most urgent needs of the day.

It is greatly to be deplored that the Education Department should still hesitate to adopt the recommendations of the Royal Commission in regard to Technical and Secondary Education, viz :

"That from 16 to 21, the school authority should have the power and duty, to give to all the necessitous blind, a liberal grant to maintain themselves while learning a trade.

"That the adult blind and those who become blind from 21 to 50, should equally receive help from the school authority to learn a trade, in the same way as if they were under 21." (Page 40, par. 247.)

It is not too much to say, that were these recommendations legislatively adopted and administered by the Education Department, with the tact, consideration, and gracious encouragement which have done so much to promote the success of the Elementary Education Act, 1893, large numbers of the Blind would be brought under training, and be put into the way of becoming good and energetic workers.

There is reason to fear that the public do not realize in any adequate degree the measure of their responsibility in regard to the Blind, and there is great need for such concerted action by the Institutions as shall secure a much larger recognition of their claims. Every blind person efficiently educated and trained, is a distinct gain to the nation, and the amount expended upon his training will be found to be a national investment yielding profitable results, whilst the change to the individual from a life of enforced idleness to one of intelligent and industrious activity, brings courage, hope, and happiness in its train, and renders him a useful, helpful, and self-respecting member of the community. It should, therefore, be the aim of all well-wishers of the Blind to neglect no opportunity of enforcing this desirable reform, and to do everything that is possible to hasten the day when every blind person may receive the training which is his due.

Whilst the importance and urgency of such questions as the foregoing may not be gainsaid, there are others connected with the internal management and administration of Institutions upon

which the interchange of opinion may be equally useful and profitable. Of these, may be named the provision of new industries and the more economical extension of existing ones; the best markets for the purchase of material; the most advantageous methods for using the same with efficiency; the prevention of waste in the workshops; the arrangement of wages and all questions connected therewith, including the nature and extent of the charitable supplement which must always exist in connection with blind labour; the relation of prices to cost and the best methods of securing Institutions against loss.

The difficulties connected with the due adjustment of prices for Brushes, Baskets and other goods made by the Blind, especially in the larger Institutions, are many and complex. In some cases the local requirements are not nearly sufficient to take up the out-put of goods which the Blind can produce, and in order to provide full and constant employment to the workers, it has become necessary to tender for contracts in competition with firms employing cheap sighted labour.

These contracts, apart from the provision of regular work, are an element of great difficulty, and not seldom involve the Institutions in some amount of loss. To take a case in point. The Bradford Institution is at present engaged in the manufacture of Brushes for one of the Government Departments, for which the price obtained is not nearly sufficient to cover net cost of material and labour.

The Directors of the Army and Navy contracts, and other departments of the public service, require large quantities of goods which the Blind can make. It is much to be desired that some means could be devised whereby the Blind might accomplish their share of this work without being subjected to the excessive competition which at present exists. Although it is not to be expected that the Government will desire to pay more than a reasonable price for the goods which they require, it may be that upon suitable representation of the fitness of the Blind for this work some consideration might be shewn, and either directly or otherwise, a portion of the requirements of the public service might be specially allotted to them.

Considerations of this nature indicate the necessity for some influential organisation or "Central Bureau" which should be directly charged with the oversight of the interests of the Blind as a whole, and able to act as occasion might require for the promotion of any and every movement for their benefit.

Such a "Central Bureau," fully conversant with the needs of the Blind, possessing the latest information upon every matter relating to them, and in close touch with all existing agencies, might do much to foster and improve the present condition of things, and, eventually, bring about such unity of action as

shall secure for the whole of the Blind of the country the advantages most suited to their individual needs.

One of the earliest duties of such a Bureau might be the initiation of steps towards obtaining a National Register of the whole of the Blind in the United Kingdom. To this end, the co-operation of Institutions, Workshops, and Home-Teaching Societies might be invited, and the country divided into such suitable districts as would prevent over-lapping and yet secure a fairly accurate return.

Following upon this would come the classification as to age, sex, condition, &c., with such particulars as would enable the Bureau to note the districts for which further provision educationally, or by way of workshops ought to be made. In this way new centres of interest might be created, and the public stimulated to a more worthy fulfilment of its responsibilities towards the Blind resident in such neighbourhoods.

In connection with the education and training of the young, the Bureau might render considerable service to the schools, and, possibly also, to the Education Department, by circulating from time to time reports of improved methods of teaching, new appliances, &c., and by investigating suggestions of skilled and enterprising teachers and managers.

The promotion of a scheme of technical and secondary education would naturally form an important element in the work of the Bureau, and in the organization of public opinion in support of the scheme, and in formulating the recommendations of skilled experts in regard to it, its aid would be invaluable.

It might also render notable service to those of the educated Blind who have laboured assiduously to qualify themselves for the art of teaching, and who, having passed the necessary examinations for sighted teachers, and received certificates from the Education Department, now find it a matter of much difficulty to secure employment in their profession. The Bureau might do something to remove the prejudice which still exists in regard to the employment of Blind teachers, and by representations on their behalf to the Education Department and to other authorities, might secure more favourable consideration than has hitherto been extended to them.

In this connection, I trust the following testimony from the Report on Schools for the Blind, 1896-1897, by the Rev. T. W. Sharpe, C.B., late Senior Chief Inspector, may not be considered inappropriate.

“The blind teachers of blind children are invaluable in large schools where several classes are taught, and in small classes also, provided the difficulties which a blind teacher cannot cope with, in the preservation of order and cleanliness

and the prevention of danger, can be undertaken by an attendant monitor. They know the special difficulties of the Blind, and although the Blind require much less assistance than is commonly believed, and are as cheerfully self-helpful as the sighted, blind persons alone can appreciate and remove certain difficulties by special methods known only to themselves."

In regard to the remuneration of teachers, Mr. Sharpe proceeds: "I should like to put in a plea for higher payment of teachers, both for the Blind and the Deaf. It should be recognised that besides the difficulties of the ordinary teacher, teachers of blind and deaf children have special difficulties only to be encountered by scientific treatment of a very thorough character; a work which requires special science, special patience, and special devotion, ought to be remunerated at a special rate."

Testimony of such weight and value, founded doubtless upon actual results witnessed by the late Senior Chief Inspector in the course of his official duties, is a splendid justification of the claims of duly qualified Blind teachers to be allowed a reasonable share in the work of the education of the young.

The Central Bureau might also formulate a series of recommendations in regard to those pupils who leave Institutions after the period of training is completed, and thus prepare the way for such an adaptation of the Saxon System as might be found applicable to all the Institutions of this country.

It is to be feared that many of the causes of failure which have occurred in the past have been due to the unexpected difficulties which confront the young Blind during the period immediately following upon school life, and that if Institutions would adopt a few simple measures as to oversight, temporary assistance, and advice during these early years, many of these difficulties might be alleviated, or entirely disappear.

With regard to the administration of Pensions for aged and infirm blind workers, the Bureau might render useful service. At many of the Institutions there are blind workers who, by their diligent industry, unflinching regularity and consistent good conduct during a long term of years, have earned for themselves the respect and esteem of all with whom they have had to do. For such workers it is surely fitting when old age comes on, and the physical powers begin to fail, that some form of pension should be obtained for the comfort of their declining years. If the Institutions should be unable to secure these from local or other sources, the Bureau might be invited to use influence on their behalf with the large special Charities for the Blind, in order to enable them to receive the recognition due to such long and honourable service.

From these and other considerations which might be adduced,

I would respectfully urge the importance of greater solidarity and interchange of opinion among Institutions, and the need for the establishment of a Central Bureau for the service of the Blind, and I trust the present Conference will not separate without such expression of opinion in favour thereof, as may lead to the adoption of suitable measures for the furtherance of these ends at an early date.

In order to render practical service among the different departments of work for the Blind, Conferences, such as the one in which we are now engaged, should take place at intervals of not more than two years, and be held in turn at those centres where important Institutions, workshops or other agencies are being carried on.

The Institutions of Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow and elsewhere, present features of interest illustrative of recent developments in scholastic and industrial work, which might, with great advantage, be studied by the representatives from other Institutions. Moreover, it may be anticipated that the visit of the Conference would not be unattended by considerable benefits to the Institution visited, inasmuch as the proceedings might be expected to create greater local interest, not only in the welfare of the Blind generally, but also in the particular Institution with which, for the time being, the Conference might be identified.

The arrangements for these Conferences would most fittingly come within the province of the Central Bureau, for which, as has been evidenced by the admirable arrangements for the present Conference, the Committee and Secretary of The Gardner's Trust for the Blind possess such exceptional qualifications and skill. It has been suggested by the representatives of several Institutions, that if the Committee of this important Trust, could, consistently with their other duties, kindly undertake the inauguration of the Central Bureau, their action would receive the support and co-operation of all existing organizations and be attended by far-reaching and most beneficial results to the Blind.

MRS. FAWCETT :

Ladies and gentlemen, I think you will all agree with me that we have listened to a very interesting paper. It is now thrown open for discussion, and I shall be glad if any who wish to speak will send in their names for that purpose.

DR. RANGER (British and Foreign Blind Association):

Mrs. Fawcett, I have only a few words to say, and I wish to confine myself to one particular point, which I think has been overlooked by Mr. Tate and which is of the very greatest importance to the Blind and to all Blind Institutions, and that

is the subject of the uniform keeping of accounts. There is no method by which any Institution evinces from time to time its health, its activity, its fruitfulness, so fully and so accurately and so inevitably as by the comparison from year to year of its own accounts. We are all familiar with the process in our own private concerns, and how useful it is to compare under the same heads from year to year, or from half-year to half-year, the expenditure and the income.

From the point of view of such a body as the Gardner's Trust, or, indeed, of any other intelligent intending benefactor, whether of little or much, adherence to a uniform system of accounts by the various Institutions is of very special value; and if from the point of view of benefactors, then from that of the Institutions themselves, and so of the Blind generally. Indeed, I rank this question of keeping accounts on the same plan as next in importance to that of adhering to the same system of reading and writing. To see and measure clearly and readily the well-being and comparative prosperity of a given Institution, and thus to be able to read in unmistakable figures its title to support, is the first and surest step to finding that support and obtaining it.

It is scarcely necessary, on the other hand, to emphasize the disadvantages of each Institution keeping its accounts on a special and peculiar plan. How utterly useless it makes those accounts to all who desire to use them for the purpose of ascertaining the comparative prosperity of the Institution to which they refer! The work and difficulties of the Gardner's Trustees must be enormously increased beyond anything that is necessary by this practice. I know that the objection will be that the imposing of a compulsory system of accounts would be interference with the private administration of the funds and affairs of Institutions, and also that in some cases the provisions of the Trusts and the regulations which control many Institutions would not admit of such uniformity. Those are objections which I admit have some force, but it is a matter of degree. I am convinced that it would be possible to form a skeleton outline of the two sides of accounts, so as to reveal the true state of affairs and at the same time afford sufficient information for effective and useful comparison. If in any particular case the controlling trusts or regulations necessitate the preparation of accounts on a particular plan (a provision which my experience enables me to say rarely appears in such trusts), then it would be easy to conform to the requirements of such a provision and still to furnish, for the use of such a body as the Gardner's Trustees, or of a Central Bureau, another set of accounts prepared on the required system. It would simply mean a little re-arranging of the figures. If, therefore, a Central Bureau is ever

established, I hold that one of its first duties will be to insist that all Institutions and organisations for the benefit of the Blind that administer public funds, or seek for public support, should keep their accounts on a uniform plan.

REV. J. F. OSBORNE (Hon. Sec., North London Home):

Mrs. Fawcett, my only excuse for addressing the Conference is this. For the last 15 years I have been Hon. Secretary of the North London Homes for the Blind, and I can say, on behalf of the Committee, that we are particularly glad that this Conference is being held, and we hope that it will be continued in London or elsewhere from time to time. Some three years ago I asked my Committee whether we could not have such a Conference. At that time we were not able to carry it out, and the matter dropped through. I have for some years past been hoping to see such a Conference, and I think I did mention the matter to Mr. Wilson. In the course of the past 15 years we have had a great many applications for admission to our Homes, which we have had to refuse, partly for want of accommodation, and partly because our Homes were not at all adapted for the persons who applied. The particular class of people for whom we cannot make any kind of provision are those who have some special ailment—those who are paralysed for instance, or have some troublesome chronic complaint. We have no means of nursing such persons, and we never know what to do with them. Our Homes are not intended for them, and very often we have been obliged to send them to the Workhouse Infirmary, as we know of no other place.

I want to impress upon you the necessity of a Central Bureau, and what Mr. Tate said is admirable. May I just emphasize that I do hope the Gardner's Trust will be the Bureau, or at least form a Committee for that purpose. There could be no better body to carry out such a scheme, and I hope that will be done. The Bureau would be very useful in this way. We should be able then to say to any person who applied to us, "Will you kindly write to Mr. Wilson (or whoever is appointed), and tell him what you want." It would stop a good many persons from writing to us and being disappointed. If they could only write to a Central Bureau they could find out whatever they wanted.

Every society which does anything for the Blind should be compelled (if they want to be recognised at all) to send their accounts, or certainly to send the prospectuses of their work, to the Bureau. They should do it to be recognised at all, so as to be put on the list. We should be very glad indeed to send to the Bureau, so that the person could know whether he could be received in our Homes or not. It would save a great deal of time and trouble, and would be useful for keeping in touch with

other Institutions. We should be very glad to refer those blind persons who have some illness or ailment which is of a very trying nature to the Bureau—case of cancer, for instance. We could not nurse such a person in our own Homes, and would be obliged to send the case to the Workhouse Infirmary. The Bureau could do a great deal of most useful work in that particular department.

MR. MEESON (Leeds Institution):

I come from a County where there are eight Blind Institutions, and we get applications at Leeds from young men and women from every district in the county for employment. They have been trained in the Schools at York and Sheffield, and we also have children pass through our schools and returned to their homes without any practical help for a future livelihood. But who is responsible for these cases is a very serious question, which requires solving. Now, if we were all working together, if there were this solidarity that has been spoken of in the paper, these cases would derive considerable benefit. There are difficulties which we cannot get over very readily; one of them is a very important one, and it is, that when we bring from a neighbouring district a blind man or woman into the town of Leeds, they invariably become chargeable to the rates, and the Guardians are very suspicious of this kind of business. We may have, for instance, an application from a young man, whose parents are living perhaps twenty miles from us, and we have to say, "This is not a Home for the Blind, it is only a Workshop." How is he to get board and lodging? Who is to provide such board and lodging? Thus you see it becomes a serious undertaking and expense upon the Institution, upon which really the young man has no claim except the claim of humanity. But, unfortunately, we have so many such claims at our very doors, and not having a superabundance of funds, we cannot deal with these applications. I do feel that if we were working together hand in hand there might be some means by which these cases could be taken up. The hardest task we managers have is to say "No" to an applicant. I never use that word but I see before my mind's eye the future solitary and helpless condition of that lad and girl, or man and woman, to whom we have to say "No;" and I only wish we could work together with the common end of saving them from such a fate.

Just a word with regard to keeping accounts in a uniform manner, as I think that is important. I will tell you why. When our reports are before our Committees they have no means of fairly comparing one Institution with another. We debit certain charges against any particular trade department, and others debit something else, in making up the profit and loss account, and therefore there is no fair comparison. I am in

favour of a uniform system of keeping accounts, so far as the trading departments are concerned. I think the directors have a right to be able to fairly test the work of their responsible officers by comparing notes with neighbouring towns. One practical result we should always be tested by, and that is, the benefits the Blind are receiving in our Institutions, both morally and financially. I am glad to say that in the course of twelve years we have raised our wages list from £350 to £1,450. We have not doubled the number of our workers, so that you see the individual earning power of the Blind has been considerably increased at Leeds by careful management. In the midst of many discouragements we have the one solid pleasure that our labours have resulted in a larger number of the blind being benefited by constant work and better pay.

MR. ILLINGWORTH (Edinburgh School):

Mrs. Fawcett, ladies and gentlemen, I have only a word to say on the subject of the excellent and comprehensive paper which we have had from Mr. Tate. As I said at the opening of my paper yesterday, it was my sincere wish that this Conference might result in some practical good, and if only we can see the Central Bureau, which has been proposed this afternoon, set going, it will be one excellent fruit of this Conference. It struck me when the paper was being read that especially good was the suggestion of a National Register of the Blind. I do not know how you find it in England, but in Scotland I know, that although we have had a compulsory Education Act nearly two years longer than you, there are many outlying parishes where it appears to me the School Board authorities do not know that it is incumbent upon them to enforce this Act. I believe it is possible that such a thing occurs in England also. About three years ago I advised my Directors to send out a prospectus of our Institution and our work, including an extract from the compulsory Education Act with regard to the Blind and Deaf, so that all those to whom it was sent, Parish Ministers, Chairmen of School Boards, and others, might see (if they had not seen before) the duty that was incumbent upon them. I believe it has resulted in some good, but I believe there are cases where School Boards will not, unless the matter is put before them very forcibly, take the trouble to send their children to a place where they can be properly educated, but will allow them to go to their own schools, where they can only pick up a little knowledge. If there were a National Register, as has been suggested, it would be quite possible to know whether all children of school age were being educated or not, and if not, measures could be taken. That would be one very important work for the Central Bureau. It seems to me that the strongest recommendation is the power of concentration it would give. We have been too

divided in our efforts on behalf of the Blind, and if only we could get the Institutions in England, Scotland and Ireland to work for one common good, by Meetings or Conferences every three years or so, as as been suggested, I am perfectly certain that there is a better time for blind workers and children than we have ever had yet.

MR. MUNBY (York School) :

Mrs. Fawcett, I am sorry that I was detained in the City until after two o'clock, and therefore have not had the advantage of hearing all that Mr. Tate has put before the Conference, but with the title of his paper I cordially agree, and sincerely feel that we need greater solidarity. We need an interchange of opinions among Institutions, and we need a Central Bureau and an uniform plan of keeping accounts. I take it, therefore, that Mr. Tate and I are not likely to differ in any particular opinion. On one point I am rather inclined to differ from him, and that is the period that should elapse between the Conferences. I think we may go from one extreme to the other. In 1883, when we had the pleasure of meeting you in York, it was said before that Conference took place it was expected that something would come of it. I have been reminded that those were our parting words at the close of the Conference, and I have been told further that there are those who believe that something did come of it. But there was this feeling when we parted, that we should need to meet again, and our meetings, as you all know, have been too spasmodic and too irregular. It is 19 years since, and there have been only two Conferences, I believe, in England since that time—one in 1890 at Norwood, and one in 1894 at Birmingham—so that you see we have been eight years without a Conference. I hope (although we do not propose to bind ourselves in that particular this afternoon), that there may be one every three or five years—five at the most, and I should be very well content with three.

The more urgent question for the authorities who carry on this work is the formation of a Central Bureau; and, with regard to that, I hope that it will not be very authoritative, or much tied up with red tape, but that it will be a centre of information, and a source of very great help in the matter of trade, and the interchange of price lists. It should help us in our workshops, so that there may be no overlapping, and that we may not rival one another in a way that is detrimental to all, but each supply what others do not supply and so have in the Central Bureau samples of every possible kind of manufacture. In such circumstances I feel sure that a Bureau would be of the greatest possible help, and as a means of information nothing could be better. We see that in other bodies the Bureau can save a vast amount of time, and both collect and distribute a great amount of information.

I sincerely hope that one result of this Conference will be, amongst others, that a Central Bureau will be established.

MR. WILLIAM HARRIS (Leicester Association):

The subject is one that has occupied my thoughts for many years, and I have before me notes made in the year 1866, to be used at the Conference then held at Birmingham—since that time several Conferences have been held. I hope now that we shall complete some plan, and commence business. You will perhaps say I am going to suggest a big order—I have not forgotten the financial part—if the Bureau is simply a place of inquiry, and not allowed to develop into a model school, or a model workshop, or printing office, or support for any particular hobby of any particular person, then I think the cost need not be large, nor the trouble great. An office, with a secretary and clerk, would at first be the chief expense. The office should be in a central situation; for example, at, or near, Charing Cross.

With your permission, I will just read some suggestions as to what I think this Bureau should be when established. I would have there:—

- 1—The name and address of every Institution for the Blind in the world.
- 2—A library of books, reports, pamphlets, &c., on the Blind.
- 3—A newspaper—weekly or monthly—for notices of all Annual or other Meetings to be held about the Blind, also reports of all meetings and Conferences, soon after they have been held.
- 4—A Museum of goods made by the Blind; and of apparatus for their use.
- 5—The official Annual Reports of all Institutions, British and Foreign; and Reports of all Conferences.
- 6—It should provide translations of, and publish, by subscription or otherwise, foreign books, pamphlets, Reports of Conferences, &c., on the Blind.
- 7—Prepare a catalogue of literature about the Blind, with all new books, &c., added from time to time.
- 8—Prepare a list of blind persons who want employment.
- 9—Prepare a list of Institutions with vacancies for workers.
- 10—Keep, for sale, a stock of books and pamphlets, &c., on the Blind.
- 11—It should appoint a Sub-Committee to make inquiries, and suggestions.
- 12—Have a catalogue of all books, &c., in all types, for the Blind, also stating where they can be obtained, and the price of them.
- 13—Particulars relating to games, amusements, and recreation.

- 14—An Official Guide to British and American Institutions for the Blind.
- 15—A register of all particulars respecting each Institution.
- 16—A register of the wants of each Institution; for example, over-stock, or under-stock.
- 17—A register of experienced certificated teachers and officers, who want occupation.
- 18—A register of vacancies for pupils and workers.
- 19—A scrap-book of cuttings about the Blind, from newspapers, or magazines, with the name and date of the publication from which they are taken.
- 20—A list of new trades and occupations which have been tried, also those which have been found suitable for the Blind.
- 21—Have a collection of literature for, and about, the Blind in America and Canada.

MRS. FAWCETT :

We have some friends still wishing to take part in the discussion, and I must therefore ask the speakers to confine themselves to five minutes.

MR. PLATER :

Mrs. Fawcett, ladies and gentlemen. I have very little to say on the matter under discussion, other than that Mr. Tate's paper is worthy of the thoughtful consideration of every member of this Conference. It has, with one slight addition, my unqualified support, and that addition I should respectfully suggest is, to include in addition to managers of Institutions and Institutions only, successful pupils, or men who are blind and successful in business, these should be included in such a Bureau or Committee of reference. Because, while I would not for a moment have it considered that I am not giving credit to the full to the managers of Institutions for all the good work they are doing, still I do believe that the experience of successful blind men would be found very useful in discussions that might take place in the management of such a Bureau. Because after all, all these Institutions in the country are named "Institutions for the benefit of the Blind," and anything in which the interest of the Blind is concerned, the Blind who have had experience should, I think, partake in discussions for the benefit of those similarly afflicted to themselves. There may be some difficulties in the way, but I apprehend none. Now with that exception Mr. Tate's paper is thoroughly practical, and as I said before, has my unqualified support. I believe that such a Bureau and such a general system of keeping accounts at Institutions would be most desirable if it were possible, as they could compare and take from the keeping of those accounts lessons that would not only benefit the Institu-

tion as an Institution, but would largely tend to benefit the pupils also.

Another phase of the question is that if such a system of book-keeping were formed that would benefit Institutions, how much more useful would it be to a blind man starting in business to have a leaf out of that book for his guidance in the management of his affairs. Now I do hope I shall not be accused of egotism if I state that I have a way of keeping books like this. Every Saturday I can tell to the pound what my increase is that day over the same day of the previous year, what it is in every quarter over previous years up to that hour, and therefore I am encouraged with the results, or I have to put forth some fresh energy to make it more, and I believe that style of book-keeping has helped me very considerably in my business, inasmuch as this, that I have always beaten the record every year since I have been in business; I have made a rule that that year shall be better than the previous one, and I think what has helped me more than anything else to this end is to constantly have the results of my business before me week in and week out.

Mr. Harris gave us some very useful ideas, but I am afraid the order is too big as a whole to be carried into practical effect. However, I have no doubt that notes will be taken of his recommendations, and there are many that will be found very useful to Institutions for the Blind, and for the benefit of the Blind generally. I thank you very much for the attention given me.

MR. WADE DEACON (Liverpool School):

I only want to say one or two words with reference to this most interesting paper by Mr. Tate. With regard to the Conferences, I agree with one of the speakers who suggested that they should not be held too often. I think it is a mistake to meet and talk for the sake of talking, and the usual result of having frequent Conferences, in my experience, is that people talk a great deal and there is not much result. One of the great advantages of considerable intervals between Conferences is that more practical work is usually got through.

With regard to the general subject of solidarity, I should think all of us who have had experience will agree with Mr. Tate; and I should like to take this opportunity of expressing the thanks that I feel are due to Gardner's Trust for the issue of that excellent periodical, "The Blind." I have it regularly, and read it conscientiously. I feel very much indebted to Mr. Wilson and the Committee for this very useful publication. It is exceedingly interesting, and I have very frequently found it of great advantage.

With regard to the keeping of accounts in one uniform system, there are obvious difficulties, and I think that Dr. Ranger pointed out one of the difficulties of making a change—that is,

that many of our Institutions are old, and we have kept our accounts in a particular form for a very long time. The advantage of that is, that we can compare one year's work with that of previous years. That is a great advantage, and we can from year to year see how our work is progressing. If we have to adopt a new system, there will be no possible comparison for some years between one year's work and another.

I was rather struck with a remark by Mr. Illingworth with regard to School Boards not sending their blind children to school, and that they did not know their duty. I happen to be a member of a School Board; and some years ago, at one of the School Board Conferences, the Clerk of a very small Board stated, if I remember rightly, that his Board could not send a blind child to a school because of the expense. To send this one child would necessitate the levying of a rate of 4d. in the £! It does not follow that a School Board does not know its duty, but it may evidently close its eyes because of the expense.

MR. PINE (Nottingham Institution):

Mrs. Fawcett, as we are now drawing to the close of this Conference, we must all feel that it has been a very valuable and instructive one. We have had some most important papers, and some very earnest discussions. Everyone has seemed to be imbued with great earnestness and zeal, and keen anxiety to discover all that can be done for the furtherance of the cause of the Blind. We had the usual battle of the Braille yesterday, and I am sure we shall all go away from this Conference feeling that there is a great deal yet to do. If I have been impressed with one thing more than another it has been, to quote the words that were used by a great Statesman lately, "So much to do, so little done." With regard to the Conference, I think it is very valuable indeed to have a Conference such as this, and we should have it followed up by others; but I agree with the previous speaker that they ought not to be held too often, because we want time to *do* something in between. I do think, however, that we ought not to let these Conferences drop. We have not had a National Conference such as this since 1890, and none were held between that year and 1883. There should have been one held in Edinburgh in 1893, but it never took place. We have had much discussion, and now what we really want to ensure is that there shall be some practical outcome of all this talk. What is to be the outcome? It has been suggested, and I think the suggestion is very valuable, that there should be certain Committees formed to deal with some of these matters and carry them forward to a practical issue—one to deal with the "Defective" Children question, and another to deal with the Uniform Braille. That Committee will have a very difficult problem indeed, because it has been before those interested in the Blind for a number of years, and

the question is still as unsettled as ever, but we must leave it to the earnest deliberations of that Committee, in the hope that they will be able to deal with it effectively, to the great benefit of blind education and Braille literature. But I think, ladies and gentlemen, that we want another Committee. The question of the education of blind children has been settled, and education is assured to them. We want now to turn more attention to technical education, and to ensure employment for those who have been taught. We had two most important papers yesterday morning on these subjects, and we have had a very important and interesting paper this afternoon from Mr. Tate. Those papers deal with practical questions in regard to the employment of the Blind, about which there are many considerations, and I do think that if we could have a very strong Committee to deal with the questions brought up in those papers, it would be of the utmost service. I should like to ask that a Committee be formed to deal specially with the subjects contained in those three papers. I thoroughly agree with the idea of some Central Bureau. We have had a most useful paper from Mr. Tate this afternoon, and it has dealt with practical difficulties. We have all of us felt (we who are charged with the management of Institutions) that we are working very much alone—I have felt it very much myself in past years and it has been my privilege and pleasure very often to write to other Institutions for information and advice. I used often to consult my great friend, Mr. Buckle, who is now gone, and whose loss we all so much deplore, and I have received most valuable information from Birmingham and other Institutions when I have had any difficulty; and it has also been my privilege, at times, to give advice and information to others. I think, therefore, that if we had some Central Authority, who would focus the opinions and disseminate the information from a sort of head-quarters, it would be extremely valuable, for it would weld the Institutions together and bring them into touch with one another, and it would be useful in numberless ways: and I can conceive of no better authority than Gardner's Trust for the Blind. We all hope, I am sure, for much success and progress from this Conference, and I do hope that, in the words of Mr. Munby at the conclusion of the York Conference in 1883, we may feel that "something has been done, or, in other words, something has come of it."

A voice: With regard to the paper which could not be given by Dr. Hartley this afternoon, shall we have it in the Report?

MR. H. J. WILSON:

No, I am afraid not, he is too ill to write it.

MR. JEFFREY, (Cardiff Institution):

There is one matter I should like to bring before the Conference in connection with our Institution in Cardiff—it is a little experience I had last year. Instead of one manager helping another, I discovered that brushes were being sold in Cardiff from another Institution. I do not think it right that one Institution should oppose another in their own town. I do not wish to mention the Institution, but I wrote to the Manager, and he replied he was not aware that it was going on. I had several complaints from ladies who thought they had been helping our Institution, and who did not discover otherwise until the man had gone. The Manager told me that these brushes had been sold to a hawker, and he was not responsible for what became of them after they were sold. I thought I should like to mention this, because there are so many Managers present, and being a young Manager myself, I should be glad to have encouragement and assistance from the older Managers, rather than any opposition or hindrance in my work.

In connection with mats made on boards, we make all our mats in Cardiff on boards, and some have been in use in the Free Libraries and in some of the public buildings in Cardiff for 20 years or more. I thought this might be interesting to those who objected to the boards or frames.

MR. MEESON, (Leeds Institution.):

I happen to be the Manager referred to. We supply brushes to a hawker. He does not say what he is going to do with them. I believe that he goes from town to town, and sometimes sells the brushes where there are Blind Institutions. Will you tell me how I can stop that? I simply supply the brushes when he sends a Postal Order to pay for them.

MRS. FAWCETT:

It is hardly germane to the subject. I think we must not allow the discussion to go further on this point. The matter might be brought before the Bureau.

MR. JOHN TENNANT (Indigent Blind Visiting Society):

I would say a word in support of this proposal. I think it is most important that we should have a Central Bureau. There are odd bits of work which it is nobody's business to do at present, which such a Bureau would naturally take up. To mention one; Mr. Johnson's Annuities for the Blind was an extremely good piece of organising work, and I should take it that a Central Bureau like this would continue that work, and let us have as much light on the subject as we can. The same book suggested to me that such a body might possibly organise an improvement in the distribution of charity. I will give you an instance which I happen to know. I know a case—I won't mention names—of

a man who has been taught at a Blind Institution a thoroughly good trade, which he is now practising successfully, and he has two considerable annuities from charitable sources. I know of another case of a man practising the same trade and certificated by the same Institution, who is almost on the verge of starvation. When annuities are given to the younger Blind, might it not be possible that they should be on the principle of scholarships, which gives a man a chance of getting on, and are then passed on to others when their purpose is accomplished. The Bureau would be just the kind of thing to organise such matters, and put them on a more satisfactory basis.

MR. DIXSON (Oxford):

Mrs. Fawcett, ladies and gentlemen. The chief reason why I came here is to suggest that this kind of Bureau work is already being done to some extent by Gardner's Trust for the Blind, and the suggestion I wish to make is that they should only say so. A great many people come to one and say "Do you know of this? How can I find out about that?" One naturally answers "Write to Gardner's Trust for the Blind." I remember writing about an address of some sort, and I asked where I could obtain information with reference to Braille in Hebrew for the Blind. Gardner's Trust did not know, but they sent me to somebody who did. There are many things which might be done by this Bureau—thus, the interchange of Music which has been written out by different people. One man writes out certain music, and then finds out that it has been done by somebody else, and it might very well be done by such a philanthropic society. I would suggest in conclusion that if Gardner's Trust would only come forth and announce themselves as this Bureau, or in other words allow the willing horse to be driven, it would not be perhaps impossible to induce the Government to furnish, or put us in the way of furnishing, a great deal of information which such a Bureau could supply.

MR. JAMES TOWNSON (Accrington Association):

The principal point of the subject this afternoon that I wish to mention is this, the subject dealt generally with the Institutions. The late Right Hon. A. J. Mundella stated that out of the 32,000 in the British Isles there were 25,000 of the Blind not connected with Institutions and workshops. This sad fact should press itself home on us. I am afraid that very largely it may be true to-day that 25,000 of the Blind are not in connection with Institutions. Would not the Bureau be doing a grand work in scattered districts? I have had the privilege of opening the subject respecting the Blind in four or five towns in Lancashire, and it is the greatest possible difficulty to bring to the notice of those in country places that there is so much to be done, and to

bring them into touch with what they can do and what they can be helped to do. Let me say, if some such Society could be formulated in all the places in England, we should probably have at least 250 blind men and women as teachers. Take five towns in our own radius of not more than ten miles round, and we have five blind teachers and visitors employed in that very locality, and it is only on that one point that I beg specially to urge that the workers for the Blind would do what they could to give information in those districts where no Society now exists. One member of our Committee begged me, as far as possible, to impress the necessity of trying to bring into England the advantages they have in Canada of free railway and postal carriage for the literature of the Blind throughout the country.

There is just one other thing that our blind teacher asked me to work for, and that is a point for the Bureau. He was very anxious to know of the various implements and tools used in the employments that have been found useful for blind men and women in the various Institutions. He is prepared to learn anything that he could teach other blind people. He is very anxious to know of the tools successfully employed, and if something like a Braille list of the tools could be provided for the blind workers here and there, it would be a very great advantage indeed in that matter.

MR. SETON-KARR :

I have listened with great attention to what has been said, but I have not been able to make out where the money is to come from to pay for the Bureau, and who is to be responsible for its establishment. We are working under rules laid down by the Court of Chancery, and so much money is allotted to various departments, and we cannot alter our allotment of funds without the express permission of the Court of Chancery.

MR. H. J. WILSON :

One word about the Committees which it has been decided to form. With regard to those for the "defective" blind, only three members have been nominated, viz., Mr. Loch, Mr. Wade Deacon of Liverpool, and a representative of Gardner's Trust—two others have to be nominated, or it can be left to the Gardner's Trust to fill up the Committee. Certainly I have learned at the Conference two things about Gardner's Trust—one is that the Secretary has nothing to do, and the other is that the Trust poses before the public as a huge milch-cow.

With regard to the Committee for arranging for the next Conference, only two names have been sent up, Mr. Pine's and Mr. Munby's, but I would venture to suggest, in addition, Mr. Illingworth, Mr. Stainsby, Dr. Campbell, and Mr. St. Clare Hill, if that be the wish of the Conference. The name of

Mr. Marston is also now suggested, and perhaps it might be left to the Gardner's Trust to complete the Committee.

Now we come to the Uniform Braille Committee. As you know, this morning it was suggested that there should be seven members on the Committee, and that two should be elected by the Conference. For those two vacancies there have been nominated Miss Hodgkin, Miss Douglas-Hamilton, Mr. Stainsby, Mr. Littlewood, and Mr. George Dickie of Belfast. Therefore, there are five candidates for the two vacancies.

Dr. Francis Warner and a representative from the National Association for Promoting the Welfare of the Feebleminded have just been nominated, which completes the "Defective" Blind Committee.

DR. RANGER (British and Foreign Blind Association):

Miss Douglas-Hamilton, whom I nominated for the Braille Committee, has, during the past two or three years, devoted a tremendous amount of time to the subject of Braille, and has, therefore, vast material at her disposal, and I think the Committee would be exceedingly defective if she were not a member. I have worked with her for two years very closely, and I do not think I could be an effective member of the Committee without her. I trust, therefore, that in any event Miss Douglas Hamilton will be elected to a seat on the Committee.

MR. STAINSBY (Birmingham Institution):

I should very much like to give way to someone else, but would urge upon the Committee appointed to deal with the Braille question to bear in mind that we in Birmingham have formulated a system of shorthand, and that if they alter the system of Braille already in use, we hope they will not if they can help it, allow it to clash with the existing Braille shorthand.

A voice: I hope Mr. Stainsby is not serious in wishing to withdraw.

MRS. FAWCETT:

I will now call upon Mr. Brudenell Carter to read his paper on the Prevention of Blindness.

THE PREVENTION OF BLINDNESS.

By ROBERT BRUDENELL CARTER, ESQ., F.R.C.S.,

Consulting Ophthalmic Surgeon to St. George's Hospital, and to the National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic; Consulting Surgeon to the Shropshire Eye Hospital, and to the British Ophthalmic Hospital at Jerusalem.

The question of the prevention of blindness requires, as the first step towards its fruitful consideration, an adequate knowledge of the causes by which blindness is most frequently occasioned;

and for this knowledge we must be indebted to the labours of the statistician. In most civilised countries some attempt has been made to collect, and to marshal in due order, the most important facts of the case; but, even as regards the actual number of blind persons in existence, the results do not appear to be altogether trustworthy. It is more than probable that, in different countries, facts of the same order may either be differently regarded, or may be arranged in a different manner; and both these forms of difference might lead to error when figures displaying them were employed for the purposes of comparison. There is reason to believe that census returns usually understate the number of the Blind; mainly on account of the fact that many who can just distinguish light from darkness, or who can just guide themselves, but who are unable to follow any occupation, are disinclined to apply to themselves the only word which would accurately describe their real condition. Thus, after the British census of 1881, it was found by careful inquiry in the three Scotch counties of Lanark, Renfrew, and Ayr, that the actual number of blind persons contained in them exceeded the number given in the census by 173; and the blindness of the whole of Scotland was estimated to be more than 15 per cent. in excess of the return. It is practically certain that similar errors would be found in the official statistics of other countries.

According to the returns of 1890, the Blind in the United States of America amounted to one in every 1,238 inhabitants, or to 808 in a million; and the census of 1891 for England and Wales shewed practically the same proportion, or 809 per million. This proportion has been steadily diminishing during the latter half of the last century. In 1851 there was said to be one blind person to every 979 of population; in 1861, one to 1,037; in 1871, one to 1,052; in 1881, one to 1,158; and in 1891, one to 1,236. Many reasons justify the hope that the census of 1901 will shew a still greater diminution; but the investigation of the figures has not yet reached a stage at which the facts can be disclosed. The smallest declared proportion of Blind to population, 445 per million, is that of Holland; and the largest, 3,400 per million, is that of Iceland; but I am not aware of the causes underlying the facts at either extremity of the scale. Russia, in 1886 had about 2,000 blind per million; and it seems reasonable to suppose that the combined influences of poverty, dirt, climate, and frequent remoteness from skilled medical attendance, must at least be largely contributory to so appalling a result.

The causes of blindness may be roughly classified as malformation, disease, and accident; the first-named being of very small numerical importance, and lying, of course, wholly outside the range of any possible preventive measures. The diseases

which may occasion blindness are numerous, whether we regard them as local or as constitutional; and, while it will be needful to invite your attention to some of them, it would be impossible in the time at my disposal, and would be useless if it were possible, to enter into any general consideration of their respective characters. The only preventive measures which apply to them are, first, that the public should seek medical advice for them in their early stages, and, secondly, that the members of the medical profession should be fully acquainted with their symptoms and with the best methods of controlling them. Much the same will apply to accidents, because, as a matter of fact, we cannot prevent the carelessness from which they most frequently arise. It is rare, of course, for both eyes to be destroyed by the same accident; and the prevention of the so-called sympathetic ophthalmia, by which, a few years ago, it was not uncommon for the second eye to be lost consecutively to an injury to its fellow, may be said to fall wholly within the domain of surgery.

Although blindness occurs at all ages, and although we are most familiar with it, and also with its cure, in the aged, on account of the increased liability to cataract and to glaucoma in advanced life, the first five years are those in which the eyes are most exposed to danger; and the first and greatest of these dangers arises from the disease which is known as infantile purulent ophthalmia, and which, a few years ago, was certainly by far the most steady source of supply to blind schools and similar Institutions. According to statistics collected twenty years ago by Haussmann, the per centage of the inmates of blind asylums who had lost sight from this disease amounted to eight in Copenhagen, to 20 in Berlin, to 30 in Vienna, and to 45 in Paris. Four years earlier it had been shown that among the young persons admitted to the blind institutions of Germany and Austria, 33 per cent. had been rendered sightless in the same way; and, according to Professor Hörner, of Zurich, the percentage in different countries ranged from about 20 to 79. In Philadelphia, in 1871, Dr. Harlan found 20 per cent. of the inmates of the blind Asylum to be cases of this kind. The disease commences from two to five days after birth, as a puffy swelling of the lids, attended by a discharge of thick matter. If it be suffered to proceed unchecked, in a short time, varying perhaps from twenty-four hours to three or four days, according to the original severity of the case, it attacks what is technically called the cornea, that is to say, the transparent membrane covering the central part of the front of the eye, first rendering it cloudy, and next causing it to ulcerate and become the seat of an open wound. Even cloudiness of the cornea, unless it be very slight, is rarely quite recovered from, and becomes an impediment to sight in a degree corresponding with its density

and superficial extent; while an infant's eye which has once undergone ulceration is practically lost for all useful purposes.

Within my recollection, infantile purulent ophthalmia has been attributed to a great variety of causes; but it is now fully ascertained to arise from one condition and from one only, that is to say, from inoculation with hurtful material at the time of birth. If it be properly treated with sufficient promptitude, while the cornea is still bright and uninjured, it is a comparatively trivial affection, which is always recovered from without injury; but if this period be allowed to pass, it is constantly fatal to the sight. It depends upon the presence of a microbe, which may be destroyed by many agents, but more rapidly and more certainly by nitrate of silver than by any other; and the effective application of a weak solution of nitrate of silver is always curative if made, in a proper manner, at a sufficiently early period of the case. The blindness so often produced by the disease is therefore a consequence of the neglect incidental to poverty, to ignorance, or to carelessness; and, acting upon this view, special precautions against these influences are now taken in Germany and in several of the United States of America. In Germany, midwives are expressly prohibited by law from treating any affection of the eyes or eyelids of infants, however apparently slight. On the appearance of the first symptom they are required to represent to the parents or others in charge that medical assistance is urgently required; or, if necessary, they are themselves to report to the local authorities and the district doctor. Neglect of these regulations entails liability to punishment.

In the United States of America, within the last few years, the States of New York, Rhode Island, Maine, Minnesota, Ohio, Maryland, Missouri, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, have all enacted laws requiring that, if one or both eyes of an infant should become inflamed or swollen or reddened at any time within two weeks of its birth, it shall be the duty of the midwife or nurse having charge of such infant to report in writing, within six hours, to the health officer, or to some legally qualified physician of the city, town, or district in which the parents of the infant reside, the fact that such inflammation, or swelling, or redness of the eyes exists. The penalty for failure to comply with the law is a fine not to exceed two hundred dollars, or imprisonment not to exceed six months, or both.

Infantile purulent ophthalmia has not unfrequently been a scourge of lying-in hospitals; and the inmates of these institutions and their children are indebted to Professor Credé, of Leipzig, for the introduction of a completely preventive measure. It occurred to him that the nitrate of silver would be as

efficacious for this purpose as it is in bringing about a cure, and that it might be so used as to destroy any microbes which had gained access to the infant's eyes at birth, before they had been given time to multiply or to occasion mischief. He directed that, as part of the first washing of every infant born in the lying-in hospital at Leipzig, a drop of a two per cent. solution of nitrate of silver should be suffered to fall within the lids of both its eyes from a glass rod. Prior to the adoption of this course, the cases of infantile ophthalmia in the hospital amounted to about ten per cent. of the births; but, on its adoption, the proportion at once fell to a half per cent., and, at the date of the last report to which I have been able to refer, there had been six hundred consecutive births without a single case. Equally good results have been obtained elsewhere; and it seems eminently desirable that some precaution of this kind should be universally adopted, or at least in all cases in which there is no doctor in attendance. Where there is one he will be prepared to deal with any appearance of the disease if it should occur; but there can be no possible reason why the instructed midwives whom we are hoping to obtain in the near future should not universally adopt this preventive treatment, and thus place the children of their patients beyond the reach of danger. The application ordered by Professor Cr d  appears to me to be unnecessarily strong. For curative purposes I have always found a solution of one part in 240, or of two grains instead of ten to the fluid ounce of water, to be perfectly satisfactory; and I have no doubt that it would be equally so as a prophylactic.

A form of eye-disease which produced a serious amount of blindness in this country some five-and-twenty years ago, and which had previously been very prevalent in Ireland, was a contagious ophthalmia which was very liable to attack large schools, especially such as contained the children of the very poor. A terrible epidemic of this ophthalmia occurred in some workhouse schools at Hanwell, and another, of somewhat less severity, in workhouse schools at Anerley. A highly interesting account of the conditions existing at the Hanwell school, from 1856 to 1900, written by Mr. Sydney Stephenson, was published in the fourth number of the volume for the latter year of the "Archives of Ophthalmology," and has been reprinted in a separate form. According to this account, in 1862, the state of the school was "simply disgraceful." Before expert advice was sought, many eyes had been destroyed by ophthalmia of so virulent and painful a nature that streams of water were kept playing upon the inflamed eyes, in order to reduce inflammation and to mitigate suffering. The patients were not isolated, and used to wash their eyes in pails of lotion, using their hands for the purpose. Swarms of flies, attracted by the abundant

discharge, tormented the children. The late Sir William Bowman, who was called in, found 686 cases; and several of the younger lads were stated to have lost one or both eyes from the disease. No effective means were taken to remedy these evils; and, in 1888, the late Mr. Critchett, who was at that time consulted, found 375 children affected with ophthalmia. In the following year the facts were brought under the notice of Parliament, in the House of Lords by the Earl of Strafford, and in the House of Commons by Mr. Mundella. Mr. Stephenson was soon afterwards appointed ophthalmic surgeon, a large staff of nurses was engaged, the necessary reforms of construction and management were carried out, and, ultimately, when the conditions which had created and fostered it were changed, the evil ceased to exist. It was maintained during many years by the presumptuous ignorance of Boards of Guardians and their officials, each wiser in his own conceit than seven men who could render a reason; but it is not likely that the lessons taught by experience will again be neglected, and any single case of contagious ophthalmia would now be promptly dealt with by isolation and appropriate treatment. The epidemics were chiefly due to defective dormitory and lavatory arrangements, and were no doubt promoted by unsuitable dietary and undue confinement to crowded class-rooms.

A form of disease which prevails among neglected and dirty children, and which, if not actually a frequent cause of blindness, is a very frequent cause of disfigurement of the eyes and of impairment of sight, is inflammation of the edges of the eyelids and of the roots of the eyelashes. This condition, if neglected, ultimately destroys the eyelashes, and produces contraction of the lids with distortion of their shape, so that they are no longer properly adjusted to the surface of the eyeball, and no longer carry away the tears. A very useful charity has lately been established in London, called the School Nurses Society. It provides trained nurses to visit the elementary schools in the poorest districts of London, and to attend to the small ailments of the children, to the broken chilblains, the bruises, the cut fingers, the sore eyes, the sore heads, which are to be found among them with lamentable frequency. In inflammation of the edges of the eyelids these nurses not only cleanse the affected parts themselves, and apply the simple treatment which is generally all that is required, but they also send for the mothers to meet them, and to receive instruction with regard to what is necessary to be done. As a member of the Committee of the Society, I am glad to testify that this instruction is usually thankfully received.

With regard to the prevention of all other forms of blindness, we have to look mainly to the progress of medical science and to

its prompt application for the benefit of sufferers. While preparing this paper, I wrote to my friend Professor Snellen of Utrecht; and, calling his attention to the alleged comparative rarity of blindness in Holland, asked him to favour me with his opinion as to the causes to which so gratifying a state of things could be ascribed. He replied: "I think we have here in Holland satisfactory means of early providing precaution against any acute eye-disease. From the younger generation all our medical practitioners have learned to recognise any imminent affection, and to bring the first means of treatment. All larger towns have specialists and special hospitals. It is beyond doubt that these circumstances must tend to diminish the figures of blindness; but it must be acknowledged that it is no easy task to provide statistics that are comparable for the different countries." In the direction of rendering the members of the medical profession in this country, generally speaking, better qualified to deal with the causes of blindness than once they were, the progress made during the last half century has been enormous. In the first place, the structure, the functions, and the diseases of the eyes have been studied with a care never previously bestowed upon them, and by the aid of many new or improved instruments of research; and, in the next place, the knowledge thus gained has come to flow into the ordinary current of medical education. Fifty years ago, eye-disease was looked upon as lying somewhat outside of the ordinary business of surgery, and was seldom or never admitted into the great hospitals in which the work of medical education was carried on. During my own studentship at the London Hospital I never saw a case of eye-disease, either in the wards or in the out-patient department; and the only instruction I received on the subject was from three or four very sketchy lectures, introduced into the general course on surgery. The recognition of my ignorance was forced upon me in a painful manner by an inflammation which attacked one of my own eyes in the Crimea, when serving there during the war with Russia; an inflammation concerning which I found the other surgeons around me to be little or no wiser than myself. It struck me with a sort of shame that, while I was holding myself out as competent to treat diseases and injuries, I yet had no adequate knowledge of the effects of either upon an organ of such primary importance as the eye; and I determined that, on my return to England, this disgrace should no longer attach to me. About the later sixties a great change was inaugurated. I think Guy's Hospital was the first to set apart wards for eye diseases, and to appoint an ophthalmic surgeon, who had also charge of an out-patient-department, and was lecturer on the subject in the school. King's College, St. George's, and St. Bartholomew's came next in order, and the

example thus set has been universally followed. At present, I think I am correct in saying that every medical school in the United Kingdom makes adequate provision for instruction in the diseases of the eye, that every student has opportunities of observing them, and that every great hospital receives them for treatment.

A remaining difficulty in the way of effecting, in this direction, all that is desirable, is caused, in my judgment, by the continued existence of eye-hospitals as such, survivals of an earlier period, which were once of great public utility, but which now act prejudicially upon medical education, by withdrawing an immense amount of teaching material from the medical schools. Medical students cannot resort to special hospitals for instruction; the time at their disposal not permitting of journeyings to and fro. They must find the diseases which they have to study collected under one roof; and they ought to find them in relative proportions which fairly represent their respective frequencies and their importance to the community. When one great eye hospital in London receives twenty-five thousand patients a year, and another ten thousand, and so on, there are hardly enough left to go round, for teaching purposes, among the eye departments of the great general hospitals; and the students not only suffer from dearth of material, but also because they obtain an inadequate conception of the frequency and importance of eye disease as compared with other maladies. They do not realise the proportion to other maladies in which they are likely to meet with it in practice; and they are tempted to neglect it in favour of conditions which they see more frequently. The patients gain nothing, because they would be under the same care in either case. Every surgeon or assistant-surgeon to a London eye hospital, excepting, perhaps, a few juniors, is also surgeon or assistant-surgeon to a general hospital, and is mostly employed in its eye department; while it need hardly be said that the presence of students is a condition which compels the surgeon to exercise the highest attainable care and accuracy in his examination of every case, and in his instructions with regard to its management. At the special hospital there is always a risk that attention may flag from mere weariness; at the general hospital every teacher is kept fully upon the alert by the questions of his pupils. In the interests of medical education, and therefore in the interests of the community, I should be very glad to see all the eye hospitals in London closed tomorrow, and their funds and their officers distributed among those great general hospitals in which their work would be done with increased advantage, alike to the patients, to the medical profession, and to the public.

MRS. FAWCETT :

We have all listened with great interest to the very able paper which has just been read. It is not a subject likely to lead to discussion, but is given to instruct us.

Dr. Hartley, who was to have given us a paper on the Intermarriage of Blind Persons, has been unable to complete it, owing to his illness. Dr. Rockcliffe, of Hull, has kindly consented to speak on this subject.

THE INTERMARRIAGE OF BLIND PERSONS.

BY W. C. ROCKLIFFE, ESQ., M.A., M.D., &c.,

Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, and Ophthalmic Surgeon to the Hull Blind Institution, and Hull Royal Infirmary,

There can be but one opinion as to the advisability of this procedure, so far as the remark applies to blind people in a humble sphere of life.

With the blind of means there can with few exceptions, be no objection, in fact, possibly the reverse. For who is more likely to enter into the thorough feelings and inclination of the Blind more than the Blind.

But I take it, we as a conference are here to-day, to, if possible, benefit the Blind, more especially of the humble and dependent class, and therefore my remarks must be considered to be almost entirely directed towards them.

The Royal Commission, if I remember rightly, stated, "That the intermarriage of the Blind was strongly to be discouraged," and I venture to think that this statement was the primary cause of the introduction into several Institutions of a rule, namely, "that the intermarriage of the Blind should debar them from certain privileges." In the Hull Blind Institution we did not feel justified in preventing them trying to earn their own living, the reverse, we still allowed both the blind man and his wife to continue to work in the shop, but we debarred them from the charity portion of our work, as I described yesterday, the so-called Sick Benefit and Entertainment branch, so that all the assistance they received from the Institution, was limited to wages earned for work done.

I must candidly admit I did not like this rule (which certainly had not the desired effect), and as the number of blind couples increased—many of whom were most respectable and industrious—small concessions were made, and now practically all that remains of the rule is on paper, and we have 12 blind couples in Hull.

And after all, from a moral point of view, I am not at all sure we ought to interfere, for as a blind man argued with me, "Where am I to find a sighted woman who will either be burdened with me, or risk my earning our daily bread?" The same remark applies to the blind women, and *Ceteris Paribus*, possibly the intermarriage of the Blind is not the worst of two or more evils.

What then are the objections that we who are interested on their behalf, would raise to the intermarriage of blind persons?

1. It undoubtedly produces further *poverty and misery*, and is accompanied as a rule with *filthy homes*, which from my own experience no charwoman at even £1 per day will engage to clean.

2. Frequent *discontentment and jealousy* (for the Blind are a very suspicious class) often ending in desertion of the family by father or mother.

3. The *bad effect on the children*, who as soon as they can walk, are converted into guides, and both hear, see and learn at a very tender age things they ought not, and further, not infrequently, have the early seeds of insobriety deeply sown in them, and who is there among us who does not (especially as he or she get older) remember clearly both the good or the evil we learnt from our parents?

But there is another side to the question which is not infrequently misunderstood. I mean, are the offspring of the blind more likely to be blind on account of their parents' affliction? With two exceptions I emphatically say no. The *first* is a Disease of the Retina or nervous layer of the eye termed Retinitis Pigmentosa. The *second*, Congenital Cataract.

To take the 1st—Retinitis Pigmentosa.—This disease is not only supposed to be hereditary, but is also said to be a product of consanguinity of marriage, by which I mean the intermarriage of near relations. This was first emphasised and apparently proved by my late master, Professor Leibreich some 30 years ago—since which I have had an opportunity of forming an opinion for myself, and the result of my experience is that:—

1st. The disease of itself is exceptionally uncommon, probably about 1—4000.

2nd. Although I know two blind persons with this disease each married to sighted, and one blind man with the same married to a blind woman who has not the disease, both of whom have families, I am not aware that at present there is any defect of vision of their offspring, although I am aware that the disease not infrequently does not show itself until middle age.

I am now watching with interest a young married couple both of whom not only have this disease—but are "own cousins,"

and nearly totally blind, but no amount of argument would dissuade them from their union, and they preferred to fly into the face of providence.

The other affection is Congenital Cataract. I would like to make myself clear on one point, viz: that both so-called Retinitis Pigmentosa and Congenital Cataract may either be present when there is absolutely no trace of a family history, nevertheless, Congenital Cataract is directly hereditary, as I will give one example to prove, where I have operated on three generations.

The husband, a sailor, had Congenital Cataract; three children, two girls and a boy out of a family of 11 had Congenital Cataract; one girl of whom is married and has five children; one died in a fit, three have Congenital Cataract, one perfect vision. But as most cases of Congenital Cataract are curable by operation, as I said this morning, it will depend upon the amount of vision they have attained after an operation, whether they ought to be included in the list of the Blind or not.

In conclusion, I must crave your indulgence for the scanty manner in which I have treated this subject, and regret that illness has prevented my friend, Dr. Hartley, of Leeds, from reading what I know would have been a most excellent address. But as Mr. Wilson only asked me after luncheon yesterday to take his place, I trust you will forgive my feeble attempts.

MISS PETTY (London School Board):

I do not wish to detain you many minutes, but there was one remark of Mr. Carter's on which I should like to make a few observations. I mean his reference to the School Nurses' Society. I happened to be the first nurse appointed by the Society, and Mr. Carter came round with me to the Schools to show me exactly what to do with the children under my care. I did the work for two years, and during that time I saw a great many cases of inflammation of the eyes which were prevented from becoming worse by being attended to at once. This Society, I am pleased to say, is doing splendid work, but is very much handicapped by want of funds. The Society, I believe, started originally in the hope that the School Board would take up the work of prevention of illness of school children, by attending to their small ailments in the beginning. They still hope that the Board will appoint sufficient Medical Officers and Nurses to do the work, but meanwhile they need support. I know from personal experience how much the work is wanted in the schools.

DR. ROCKLIFFE (Hull Institution);

In reference to Mr. Carter's paper, wherein he stated "that 50 years ago there were no ophthalmic wards in the ordinary

Hospitals in London," I am proud to think that my provincial Hospital was so far ahead of the London Hospitals, that I am able to claim that the Hull Royal Infirmary at that date was possessed of such wards. I also, as a practical point, wish to allude to some of the more common forms of blindness from injury, viz. : penetration of the eyeball by a thorn, when slashing fences, from want of ordinary care in this avocation, unpicking boot laces, or dresses, knots of ladies' bicycle dress guards, or children playing with open knives, whereby, by a slip, the eye is punctured and not infrequently lost.

I must also allude to the great decrease of blindness due to Ophthalmia Neonatorum (or inflammation of the eyes of the new born) from advanced ophthalmic knowledge, and further to the saving of many eyes by the value of the X rays, in determining the presence or no, of a foreign body inside the globe, and so averting sympathetic blindness of the uninjured eye.

DR. CAMPBELL (Norwood College):

After many years experience I am thoroughly convinced that the intermarriage of the Blind is a terrible calamity. I have known very sad cases both in America and this country. The first year I came to England there were thirty cases of intermarriage among the Blind of London. With few exceptions it leads to sad results both for parents and children. Blindness is bad enough when there is one in the family, but when you come to have two it is the square of the thing. I therefore beg all of you to study this question before you ever give a moment's thought to encouraging it in any form whatever. I think every Institution ought to exert all its influence to prevent it. I will tell you an instance. The late Lord and Lady Kinnaird educated a very intelligent girl at the Royal Normal College, and when she left she had a good organ appointment. A young man was sent to us from Bradford; he was educated, and was employed by a first-class firm in London. They unfortunately met and were married. He is now in some Asylum, and the wife and three children went to the workhouse.

A voice: I am pleased to say that I recently heard she was doing exceedingly well.

MR. TATE (Bradford Institution):

I would like to say a word on the medical questions, because although in my paper I might have made considerable reference to such special subjects, my desire was rather to show that on general grounds there was sufficient need for a central organisation, and to make such an appeal as would lead to its immediate foundation.

May I say how much indebted we are to Dr. Rockliffe for his valuable suggestions with regard to the classification of the degrees

of defective vision. I think the Bureau, when established, might render useful service to Institutions and the Blind generally, if, with the aid of gentlemen of the medical profession, it were to formulate regulations which would enable the Blind and those with defective vision, to be classified according to some such system as the one indicated by Dr. Rockcliffe.

In regard to the causes of blindness, medical gentlemen when examining candidates and signing the certificates of those who are considered suitable to go to the Institutions, might very materially assist the latter if they would carefully ascertain and specify the causes of blindness. It frequently happens that the cause of blindness leaves behind tendencies which unfit the child or adult for certain occupations. I have in mind at the moment cases that have come under my own knowledge, where blindness was attributable to injuries to the head, and which rendered the pupils when put to a certain trade, liable to such intense nervous excitement that the occupation had at once to be discontinued. Information with regard to the causes of blindness might not only assist in the prevention of such misadventures, but also furnish indications as to the choice of suitable trades. May I give you a case in point: A father came to see me some time ago in reference to his son, a pupil in the Bradford School for the Blind. He was particularly anxious that the lad should have the best career obtainable, and desired that if possible he should be sent to Norwood. Bearing in mind previous experiences, I enquired into the antecedents of the case. I found that the boy had lost his sight as the result of a fall which caused internal injuries to the head. I further enquired as to the nature of the boy's work in the Blind school, and from the information thus obtained, and such indications as his teachers were enabled to afford, I felt it was absolutely my duty to say "No" to his father's request. I would therefore suggest that when the Bureau is established, attention should be given to these and kindred subjects, in order that the Institutions may be enabled to arrange wisely the future careers of the young people entrusted to their care.

In anticipation that the intermarriage of the Blind would be effectively dealt with by Dr. Hartley, I did not prepare any particulars relating thereto.

If I had had to do so, it would have occurred to me that it would be well to go into the cases in my own district and to make observations for myself as to the actual conditions which exist. I believe it will be found, as Dr. Campbell said, that in the majority of cases such unions do not result happily either for the individuals themselves or their offspring. They are to be deprecated very largely on account of the injury to which the possible children of such marriages may be exposed.

May I explain that in making no reference to figures and the

keeping of accounts in my paper, it was from no desire to shirk this portion of my subject. I had arranged my own private work so as to leave last week for the special study of accounts presented in the Annual Reports of several Institutions, in order that I might submit some suggestions based thereon which might help to bring about some uniform system of keeping accounts. Unfortunately, severe illness prevented the fulfilment of this intention.

MR. H. J. WILSON :

I should like to thank Dr. Rockcliffe for giving us this Paper at such short notice. I felt ashamed of myself when I asked him yesterday afternoon to introduce the subject to-day. I am sure you will all sympathise with Dr. Hartley, who, I regret to say, is seriously ill. He is much interested in the question of the intermarriage of blind persons, and had a long talk with me on the subject not long ago. One point I should like to mention in regard to Mr. Carter's paper on the prevention of blindness. I think that a great deal can be done by distributing leaflets in regard to Purulent Ophthalmia. I am very glad to say that many Institutions insert a page or leaflet bearing on this subject in their reports. Gardner's Trust has sent out about 60,000 leaflets in the last few years, but this is only touching the fringe of a very large subject, and I wish leaflets could be circulated as recommended by the Royal Commissioners, through the Post Office or by the Sanitary Authority. I have approached both and received very little encouragement. I may say that the Gardner's Trust distributes a great many of these leaflets through District Visitors, Charity Organisation Societies and the Guardians. The leaflets very often do a lot of good. One example will suffice. I heard of an instance in which a district visitor was going her round and she found a little boy with his eyes bandaged up. The district visitor had fortunately seen one of these leaflets and read it. She said to the mother, "What is the matter with your baby?" and the mother said, "He has inflammation in the eyes, and my neighbour Mrs. Jones told me that boiled watercress was the best thing to bind on the eyes." The lady said, "Take off that bandage at once, and go to a medical man," and as this advice was acted on, that child's sight was saved.

With regard to the Concert Tickets, I have had a great many applications, and a few tickets still remain. After the meeting is over, may I ask those who wish to go to the Concert to come one by one into the Committee Room?

MR. SETON-KARR :

I wish to explain that possibly some people may think there has been an omission in the proceedings. No speaker has received the thanks of the Committee, nor have those who filled

the chair. It was thought that repeated votes of thanks would add to the length of the proceedings, and if nobody had been thanked that would have led to misapprehension. I take this opportunity of thanking all those who attended for the very valuable suggestions they have given to us in the various discussions and papers. In the name of the Committee I beg to give you our hearty acknowledgments.

DR. ROCKLIFFE (Hull Institution):

Mrs. Fawcett, ladies and gentlemen, I have so thoroughly enjoyed this Conference that I feel I cannot express myself sufficiently grateful to the originators and their able Secretary (Mr. Wilson) for the excellent and efficient manner in which the Conference has been conducted.

Personally I have never had the privilege before of listening to and discussing so many subjects affecting the welfare of the Blind, and I hope I shall have the opportunity of again being present at another such Conference.

There is a sort of Freemasonry about blindness, and I have visited most Institutions in the triangle formed by Inverness, Exeter and London, and wherever I have been the Secretary or Manager of every Institution has given me a hearty welcome, and it is a source of great pleasure and a distinct benefit to the Blind, to have the opportunity of gaining the valuable experience of others and an interchange of thought. We must all congratulate the Committee of the Gardner's Trustees on their most excellent agenda, which rightly commenced by asking a divine blessing on this most important Conference, and which we trust may result in a benefit to those whose welfare, I feel certain, is the heartfelt desire of all present; my regret is, that I am compelled to leave prior to the concluding service.

No subject seems to have been forgotten. First, we have matters relating to education, including both the higher and lower forms, and physical training. Next, we come to professions and trades and method of conducting workshops, or, in other words, "How to help the Blind to help themselves." Then, the literature best adapted for their use in their leisure hours; and, further, How to secure their comfort by pensions, homes, or otherwise.

We have also learnt much as to statistics, home-teaching societies, prevention of blindness, etc., and practically, as before stated, every subject concerning the welfare and well-being of the Blind, in addition to seeing for ourselves how the London Workshops, etc., are conducted. But this comprehensive agenda does not cease here. for the minutiae and minor details have not been neglected. I refer to the information given on the last page of the programme, including the regulations of the Meeting (and that irritating little bell, which cut many of us short in our

remarks), the general directions for getting to and from the meetings, and even our bodily comforts and means of railway transit were not forgotten, and, in consequence, the success of the Conference has been greatly increased, and the most perfect stranger in London could have had little difficulty, after reading these provisions arranged for our comfort and convenience, in finding himself at the meeting, refreshment restaurant, and home again.

I have, therefore, much pleasure in moving "That the sincere thanks of this Conference on matters relating to the Blind, here assembled, be given the Chairman, the Committee, and the Secretary of the Gardner's Trust for the Blind, not only for their kindness in arranging this Conference for the benefitting of the Blind, but also for the kind and friendly manner in which the members of the Conference have been greeted; and that our congratulations be tendered to the various Chairmen of the different meetings for the excellent and able manner in which they have conducted the business of the Conference."

I will call upon Mr. Stainsby, of Birmingham, to second this resolution.

MR. STAINSBY (Birmingham Institution):

Mrs. Fawcett, ladies and gentlemen. It gives me much pleasure to second the vote of thanks which Dr. Rockliffe has so ably proposed. I have been closely in touch with Mr. Wilson for many years, and I think that few Institutions have had more benefits from Gardner's Trust than we in Birmingham. I am afraid, however, that at times Mr. Wilson must think I am troubling him unnecessarily, but every question I put to him is most courteously and kindly answered, and every assistance (both pecuniary and otherwise) that Gardner's Trust can render has been granted. I do feel that if it had not been for the munificent benefaction of the late Mr. Gardner, the cause of the Blind would have been in a very different condition from what it is now. I have also been very much impressed with the judicious manner in which the Committee of Gardner's Trust have dispensed their funds. Mr. Wilson, I am sure, spares no pains to make the fullest possible enquiries before any assistance is given. For that reason I commend the Trust most heartily.

This Conference has been to me a source of great pleasure and edification. I thoroughly enjoyed the service at which Mr. McNeile preached so delightful a sermon. His address, and the addresses of others, have impressed me very forcibly.

I feel it to be our duty and our pleasure to give a very hearty vote of thanks to Gardner's Trust for the Blind, for the very able manner in which the arrangements for this Conference have been carried out from start to finish.

REV. ST. CLARE HILL (St. George's School):

It has been suggested that I should support this vote of thanks. I have very great pleasure in doing so. I go away from the Conference feeling glad that so much has been carried out. I do not think anyone can possibly go away without feeling that Gardner's Trust for the Blind has conferred a great benefit and means of instruction for those who are desirous of doing the best possible for the Blind. I think also our thanks should be publicly expressed to those who are not members of Gardner's Trust for the Blind, but who have taken the Chair on many occasions—including the kind lady who has been with us this afternoon.

MRS. FAWCETT:

Ladies and gentlemen, you have heard the resolution very ably moved, seconded and supported, that the heartiest thanks of this Conference should be given to Mr. Seton-Karr and Mr. Wilson, as Chairman and Secretary of Gardner's Trust for the Blind, and I am sure you will all agree with it. I will ask you to signify by acclamation what your opinion is upon the matter.

MR. SETON-KARR:

I thank you sincerely, and also for the manner in which you have been pleased to speak of the Conference. My colleagues are men of varied occupations, and except one, who is ill and away at Sidmouth, all have made a point of attending on one day or another. I shall have pleasure in announcing to them the arrangements that have been made. I shall also take care that the Chairmen shall know how you appreciate the way in which they have discharged their duties. I think we shall all go away satisfied that this Conference will not be fruitless and fall to the ground. I must add that the satisfactory arrangements which have been made are due to our Secretary, Mr. Wilson.

MR. H. J. WILSON:

I would like to thank you very much indeed for the vote of thanks which has been passed. I really do not deserve to have my name coupled with it. It has been a very great pleasure to me to assist in arranging this Conference. A great deal of pressure was brought to bear by two or three people that a Conference should be held in London. Miss Heywood, of Manchester, brought all the arguments she could. Certainly my reward for anything I have done would be that some lasting benefit to the Blind may be the result; otherwise, in my opinion, the Conference will have been a failure.

REV. N. F. MCNEILE:

I feel it a very great privilege that, after having been allowed to preach at the opening of this Conference, I should have the

further opportunity of saying a few words at its close. We have had a wide field of interesting subjects brought before us. We have all heard some things from which we dissent, many things with which we agree, and many more things which are new to us and have instructed us; and I heartily echo the words that have just fallen, that this Conference should not pass away without a real lasting effect. At the opening, I endeavoured to bring a few words of Scripture, as showing the aim and purpose of this Conference, which I think we have, by God's help, kept wonderfully in view the whole time, "to every man his work." I would now venture to bring a few more words of Scripture, as showing what is to be the practical outcome of this Conference. "Be not unwise, but understanding what the Will of the Lord is." If that Will was always easily understood, such an exhortation as this would lose its point, but it is because that Will often needs a great deal of study to find it out, that we are told not to be unwise, but to understand it. And such a Conference as this is, I take it, one great way of helping all of us to learn what that Will is. May I venture to suggest this, then, as the individual thought which each of us should carry away from this Conference. Not that we have just heard some interesting discussions, and that the matter is to end there; not that certain important points are to be left to certain Committees, who will doubtless use their utmost wisdom in settling them; but that each one should carry away a clearer thought as to what for him is the Will of God. He should think "How does it affect my future action in whatever calling I may be engaged?" It seems to me that the discussions in which we have been privileged to join, or to which we have listened, ought to help each one of us to answer that question, and I trust that what we have heard will have a real practical effect on each one of us wherever we may be placed, in discharging more wisely and more constantly that Will of God, as we come to learn more what it is. It is by such enquiries as these that we can learn that Will, and He has promised to reveal it to those who really desire to know it. I would ask you, as I am allowed to do, with this thought to join me in a concluding prayer.

After Mr. McNEILE had offered up a prayer, he dismissed the Conference with the Blessing.

FRIDAY, APRIL 25th.

During the morning, members of the Conference visited the Workshops for the Blind, at 258, Tottenham Court Road, and at 49, London Street, Greenwich, and the School at 10, Upper Avenue Road, Swiss Cottage, N.W. Permission had been kindly

granted by the authorities of these three Institutions for such visits, and the members had the advantage of seeing the Blind at work at the various industries, and of obtaining full information from the secretaries and managers who kindly accompanied the visitors round the Institutions.

In the afternoon at 3 p.m., a grand concert was held at the Queen's Hall, on behalf of the Royal Normal College for the Blind, at which present and past pupils, assisted by a select orchestra, were the performers. As is always the case where Dr. Campbell's pupils are in question, the musical programme was given with the utmost accuracy and delicate feeling, and lovers of music listened to the finished rendering with the greatest enjoyment and satisfaction. Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales, honoured the Concert with their presence, and the Princess graciously consented to receive purses on behalf of the funds of the College. Upon the Royal party taking their places "God bless the Prince of Wales," was performed by the choir and orchestra, after which an excellent programme (subjoined below) was gone through. Unfortunately, and with very great regret, the Executive Committee were obliged to announce that owing to very severe illness, Mr. August Manns, the veteran conductor at the Crystal Palace, was unable to attend, but in his absence Sir Hubert Parry and Dr. W. H. Cummings, Principal of the Guildhall School of Music, kindly consented to conduct the Concert. Complimentary tickets of admission to reserved seats at the Concert were given to all members of the Conference who were desirous of attending. The purses containing the funds collected were presented to H.R.H. The Princess of Wales between Parts I and 2 of the programme, which was as follows:

PART I.

1. ANTHEM .. "Saviour of Sinners" .. *Mendelssohn.*
2. CONCERTO, PIANO & ORCHESTRA (1st movement) *Beethoven.*
3. ODE .. "Blest pair of Sirens" .. *Parry.*
4. SYMPHONY OF ORGAN & ORCHESTRA, in D minor *Guilman.*

PART II.

5. CONCERTSTÜCK "Spring Fantasia" *Gade.*
6. RONDO, FOR TWO PIANOFORTES, in C (op. 73) .. *Chopin.*
7. MADRIGALS { (a) "The Silver Swan" .. *Gibbons.*
{ (b) "All creatures now are merry" *Benet.*
8. CHORUS OF REAPERS from Herder's
"Prometheus Unbound" *Liszt.*

CHORUS AND ORCHESTRA.

GOD SAVE THE KING.

APPENDIX.

[It was agreed that those who sent up their cards to the chairman with a request to speak on any subject and were prevented from speaking through lack of time, might briefly write out what they intended to say, and that it should be printed in the official report.]

The following four delegates have availed themselves of this privilege :—

MISS M. H. COCKBAIN, (Bradford Institution) :

Apropos of Mr. Stainsby's reference to the knitting at the Bradford Institution for the Blind, may I explain that we have 27 women, most of whom are employed in knitting. Their average weekly earnings are 9/-. We find that really good hand knitting, especially the finer shawls, *will* sell, as no woven work can compare with it. We, also, are able to sell knitted cotton toilet bags.

Two or three are employed on chair-caning, another possible and remunerative work for blind women.

MR. J. H. HEWITT, (Belfast Institution) :

I was much pleased with the paper read by Mr. Stainsby, and think for those who desire to find new openings for the employment of the Blind, the list which he gave showing the occupations which many are at present engaged in, may prove beneficial. Some of our principal industries, however, might with advantage be more fully developed.

Mr. Meeson, of Leeds, in his remarks showed how one branch of Brush making, (pan-work,) might be worked to advantage by division of labour, the Blind setting the inner staples of brooms and banisters, and the sighted the outer or more particular parts. By this means an additional man or two might be employed in each Institution. The same principle can be carried out to advantage in Basket making, as the following will show :—About five years ago I applied to the Post Office for a portion of the Parcel Post Contract, and obtained a small order; and knowing that we had to compete with sighted labour I put our very best men on to them (and I think we have as good as are to be found anywhere in the three Kingdoms,) but I am sorry to say their work failed to give satisfaction, as the hampers had not the same neatness and style as those made in the best

sighted shops in England. Before we had half completed the contract we were informed that the balance of the order had been cancelled, as the hampers were not quite up to the standard. After a few years experimenting on other work I applied for another trial, promising satisfaction this time. Another order was given, and I engaged a good sighted tradesman to work with four or five blind men, the former to do the upsetting, wailing, and bordering, the latter to make the bottom, siding, lid, and lapping with hide, etc. The sighted man sat between the four blind men siding, etc, and kept an eye on their work. The result was that the hampers were turned out satisfactorily, greatly admired, and not a single complaint made regarding them; and this year a still larger order has been placed, which will give employment for six months to eleven blind men and one sighted. Now, as the demand for baskets of a high standard quality, such as laundry, traveller, transit and Post Office hampers is still on the increase, it would be well for managers of Institutions to set themselves to secure more of it, and I believe if they will adopt the principle I have suggested they will find it successful. We have over 50 basket-makers employed, many of whom (quite blind) make from 18/- to 25/- per week.

With reference to Mr. Hill's paper, I do not at all agree with the two primary principles he inculcated viz., First, that a Blind Institution should be worked on strictly business lines, and no other; and Secondly, that the managers should not have power to distribute charitable allowances to those blind persons who are not able to earn enough to maintain themselves. With reference to the first, in my opinion the primary object of the manager is to find employment for the Blind, though it should be at a loss to the Institution. A few years ago I visited the Dundee Institution, one of the best managed in the three kingdoms, and greatly admired the work Mr. Macdonald was doing there. Last year they had a deficit of £300 in their manufacturing branch, and the chairman, at their annual meeting, made what I consider a very sensible comment on this loss. He said "he thought an expenditure of £300 a good investment when it put eighty blind persons in a position to earn over £2,000," and I maintain that Institutions should be prepared to lose, so that the Blind may gain. The loss may be met in different ways—either by collecting subscriptions to meet the deficiency, or by trading in goods not made by the Blind. By the latter means, I may state, our workshops for the Blind at Belfast have been self-supporting for the past sixteen years, and have, in addition, been able to add a small sum yearly towards supplementing the earnings of the Blind. We now employ about 120, most of whom earn fairly good wages, the total wages earned during the year 1901 amounting to £2,795.

With regard to managers giving what Mr. Hill called "doles" to the Blind. In the first place, I do not think it is right or fair to speak of allowances to the Blind as "doles." They are allowances to men and women who, after having done a faithful day's work, but through the misfortune under which they labour have not been able to earn, at trades-union rates, a decent maintenance. I am of opinion that under the circumstances there is nothing demoralising in supplementing their wages; in fact, it is a mockery to profess to help these people and to say to them we will do no more for you than if you had your sight. Now, who is better able to decide as to which is most deserving of help than the manager? He can very soon tell if a man is scheming, and he will know how to deal with him, and I think it helps to secure a bond of union and good feeling when the manager can help a poor fellow who has got behind in his wages, either through having had a poor job or ill health, or any other legitimate cause. In any case, his aim should be the welfare, comfort and happiness of the Blind, and he should be placed in a position to help them when he sees it necessary. My only regret is that I have not the means at my disposal to help some of our blind people more liberally, especially in times of sickness and old age.

Mr. Hill wound up his remarks by saying that his plan had worked so well that when he had a vacancy he was inundated with applications. It would have said much more for his system if he had been able to say that it enabled him to give employment to all who applied.

Mr. THOMAS TAYLOR (Liverpool School):

I have been pleased and interested with the paper read by Mr. Seton-Karr, and especially in one portion of it, viz., that relating to Pensions for the Blind, therefore it is on that subject I will now say a few words. I firmly believe the Blind value anything that is undertaken for them, if they have taken some steps in building it up, much more than they would if done entirely by the sighted, for the latter always have a tendency to make them feel their infirmity; therefore, as our object at all times ought to be to encourage them to be as independent as their more fortunate brethren (the sighted), I think we ought, if possible, to place them on the same basis as ourselves.

With the above in view, I am of the opinion that the Blind in connection with our Institutions and workshops, *if consulted*, would look favourably upon the scheme towards obtaining a pension which I am about to submit.

In the Institution I have the honour to represent, I find there have been admitted 719 pupils during the past twenty-seven years, therefore on this number I base my figures.

My idea is—

1st. That an office be established in London, where a register should be kept of the name, age (proved by birth certificate), address and occupation of every blind person in the kingdom who is connected with the Pension Scheme, and that only those who are working (not beggars) be admitted as members and become, at the age of fifty, entitled to a pension of £10 or £20, according to circumstances.

2nd. That the Committee of every Institution contribute to the above fund the sum of sixpence per week for each pupil in their Institution over sixteen years of age for as long as they remain. (At the Institution I represent, they are elected for six years.)

3rd. That every pupil in every Institution contribute one penny per week to the fund.

4th. That after a pupil leaves the Institution where he was taught, the Committee of that Institution keeps in touch with him or her, and continue to pay one penny a week to the Pension Fund on his or her account until he or she attains the age of fifty years.

5th. That all blind persons who have been pupils in any Institution continue in touch with that Institution after leaving, and pay regularly to the Secretary of that School the sum of one penny per week towards the Pension Scheme until they are fifty, when subscriptions cease, and they become entitled to a pension.

6th. That the Committee of every Institution open a subscription and donation account for this object, and have the power of assisting in the payments of the contributions for any former pupil, if they at any time are unable through sickness, accident, or otherwise, to meet their payments.

To give some idea of the amount of money this scheme, if carried out, would produce, I beg to point out to you for consideration that if the average age of pupils admitted to this school had been twenty-four years, and they had remained in school for the full term, viz., six years, and the Committee had paid weekly at the rate of sixpence each pupil to the fund for six years, it would amount to £5,608 4 0
 and each pupil at 1d. per week for that period. 934 14 0
 The above amount, if invested for 20 years,
 would produce, at 3 per cent. simple interest,
 the sum of 3,925 5 0
 and the Committee by continuing to pay 1d. a
 week for a further period of 20 years for the
 same pupils would amount to. 3,115 13 4
 and if each of the pupils were to pay 1d. a week
 for a further period of 20 years it would
 amount to 3,115 13 4

£16,699 9 8

This sum, if invested, would produce annually at 3 per cent. the sum of £ 501.

I do not for one moment presume that the above figures are accurate, and also must point out to you that there would be an assured income each year from subscriptions, as fresh members would join, which would provide a considerable number of pensions in addition to those provided for out of the interest on investments.

I must apologise for taking up so much valuable time, and sincerely hope my co-workers in the cause of the Blind will give my scheme their most careful attention, and if they are of opinion it is practicable, to endeavour to enlist the sympathy of the various members of their Committees, and endeavour, after the revision that would be found necessary, to get them to carry it out, and thus encourage thrift amongst our blind friends by adopting this scheme, and encourage them in the future to try to help themselves, as in the past, and work shoulder to shoulder with their sighted friends, and thus cultivate a spirit of independence.

DR. ROCKLIFFE, (Hull Institution):

There are some of the Blind who I venture to think ought rightly to be classed with the aged, and who seem especially deserving of pensions, as they become prematurely old and die comparatively young.

I allude to those blind from Locomotor Ataxy, *i.e.*, disease of the spinal column producing loss of power of locomotion, &c. These cases are most gloomy, as they are totally incapacitated from work, unable to walk, stand or bend, steadily losing muscular power and developing various paralysis, and eventually dying, possibly in a lunatic asylum, about 50 to 60 years of age. How to help these cases has been a problem to me for some time, and our Sick Benefit and Entertainment branch came to the rescue by the loan of a wringing machine. So far as I know this is the only occupation they can undertake in a sitting posture.

A great boon would accrue to this class of the Blind, if the conference could be the means of urging on all societies having funds at their disposal for the Blind, to look especially favourably upon such cases.

The disease usually asserts itself in able bodied men, more so than in women, at the age of 40 or thereabouts, *viz.*, when they are probably married, with families, making the case the more deserving.

Possibly a short description of the Home for Blind Women at Hull, may be interesting.

The Home, which is fitted up with electric light, bells and every modern sanitary appliance, was opened February, 1900, to

accommodate two aged women, two widows, and five homeless girls. At first the widows declined to part with their own furniture and home, and the girls thought they would lose their liberty. But when it was understood that the Home was, in every sense of the word, to be a happy domesticated Home—the only restricting rule being that they must be in between 10 p.m. and 8 a.m.—they soon changed their minds, and now the Home has its full complement.

The ground floor contains a workshop, a common sitting room, well furnished, in which each inmate has her private cupboard, and kitchens, &c.

The second floor has bath room, lavatory, store room, matron's sitting and bedroom, servant's bedroom, and sick ward, so that in case of illness, the patient is in close touch with the sighted.

The third and fourth floors contain nine separate bedrooms, each room is furnished with single bed, chest of drawers, &c., and numbered with an embossed brass number, and each separate key has the corresponding number marked by nicks filed on to the key.

A common sanitary lavatory stands at the end of each passage to the dormitories.

The whole of the domestic work is done in turns by the inmates, and the remainder of their time is occupied in cane chair seating. Each inmate has her separate banking account, out of which she provides most of her clothing, &c.

Friends are allowed to visit any time with the matron's consent. Nothing but happiness and contentment exist, and quarrelling of any description has so far never been heard.

The total cost including the matron's salary and other expenditure for board, &c., is about 8/- per week, each blind person. Every inmate is paid for by their friends or the guardians at the rate of 7/- per week.

During the summer the Home is closed for a month, and the inmates are transferred to a rented house at the seaside.

I think in all such Homes, it is most desirable that there should be two sighted residents, of whom one should always be on the spot in case of accidents.

LIST OF UNIVERSITY DISTINCTIONS

GAINED BY THE STUDENTS OF THE COLLEGE FOR BLIND SONS
OF GENTLEMEN, POWYKE, WORCESTER.

Rev. N. F. McNeile, M.A., Dublin University, Scripture Catechetical Prize and Certificate, 1886. Second Class Prize in Logic, 1866. Hebrew Prize, three separate years, 1867, 1869, 1870. Third Class in the B.A. Examination (Honour School of Logic and Ethics), 1868; Extra Prize in the Archbishop King's Divinity Examination, 1869; The Downes Exhibition, 1869. First Class Divinity Testimonial, 1870. M.A., 1871.

Rev. W. H. Robins, M.A., Trinity College, Dublin, Scripture Catechetical Prize, 1871; B.A. Examination, 1872, Divinity, Testimonial, 1873; M.A., June, 1876.

A. W. G. Ranger, M.A., D.C.L., Worcester College, Oxford; Matriculation and Responsions, 1872, Moderations, 1873; First Class in the B.A. Examination (Honour School of Jurisprudence), Christmas, 1875; First Class in the B.C.L. Honour Examination, Summer, 1876. Proxime Accessit Vinerian Scholar, 1877.

Rev. H. J. R. Marston, M.A., Fellow of Durham University, Bishop Hatfield's Hall, Durham. Open Scholarship of £50 at entrance, January, 1874; Bracketed Second for Classical Scholarship, June, 1874; First Class in the School of General and Classical Literature, (first year); University Classical Scholarship; Newby Scholar, 1875; Hellenistic Greek Prize, June, 1876; First Class in B.A. Examination; Fellowship, 1877.

Rev. F. T. Marsh, B.A., Bishop Hatfield's Hall, Durham; Matriculation, 1873; Open Theological Scholarship, October, 1873; First Divinity Examination, October, 1874, Exhibition, £30; Second Divinity Examination, Licentiate in Theology, 1875; B.A. Examination, 1877.

Rev. C. E. Fawcett, B.A. Queen's College, Oxford; Matriculation and Responsions, 1874; Moderation, 1876; Divinity Examination, 1877; Modern History and Political Economy Examinations, 1878; B.A. 1879.

Rev. J. J. Beresford, B.A. St. John's College, Cambridge; Matriculation, 1875; King's College, Previous Examination (First Class in Part I., Second Class in Part II.), June, 1875; Second Class, B.A. Examination (Law Tripos), Christmas, 1878.

Rev. D. L. Johnson. Worcester College, Oxford; Responsions 1876; Moderations, 1877; Honour School of Jurisprudence, Third Class, B.A., 1880.

Rev. A. Whitehead, B.A., Bishop Hatfield's Hall, Durham; Matriculation, 1878; First Divinity Examination, 1879; Second Divinity Examination; Licentiate in Theology, 1880; B.A. Examination, 1881.

Rev. W. Macgowan, B.A., Bishop Hatfield's Hall, Durham; Entrance Scholarship, School of Theology, £30; First Divinity Examination, 1879; Second Divinity Examination; Theological Licence, 1880; B.A. Examination, 1881.

Rev. S. F. Whitehead, B.A., Bishop Hatfield's Hall, Durham; Matriculation, 1879, Scholarship, £20; First year Examination E Clssical and General Literature, Third Class; Final Examination for B.A. Degree, 1882; Third Class.

O. Richardson, Worcester College, Oxford; Matriculation, 1880; Responsions, 1881; Moderations, 1882.

G. Laupmann, B.A., St. Peter's College, Cambridge; Previous Examinations (First Class in Part II.), 1881; Mathematical Tripos, 1883; Second Class B.A.

W. Wolstenholme, Royal Academy of Music Local Examinations, Honour Certificates in Piano and Organ, 1881; Examination in lieu of Responsions, Oxford, 1886; First Examination for Degree of Mus. Bac., 1887; Worcester College, Final Examination for Degree of Mus. Bac.

S. G. K. Rowcroft, B.A., Bishop Hatfield's Hall, Durham, Matriculation; First year Examination in Classical and General Literature, 1882; Fourth Class; Final Examination for Degree of B.A. Third Class, 1884.

H. Warmington, Cambridge Local Examinations, 1881, satisfied the Examiners; St. Peter's College, Cambridge, 1887, previous Examination, First Class in Parts I. and II., Second Class in additional subject; in May Examinations, 1888, First in his year in his College, receiving a Prize for Merit of £20. Mathematical Tripos, Second Class, B.A., 1889.

F. M. West, Non-Collegiate, Oxford, Examination in lieu Responsions, 1884; Goldsmith Scholarship, by competition, £50 per annum; Moderations, Third Class in Classical Honours, 1885; Trinity College, Oxford, Final Examination for Degree of B.A.; Honour School of History, Second Class, 1887.

Rev. J. P. Jones, Glasgow University; Fourth Prize Senior English Literature; Third Prize Senior Moral Philosophy, 1884; Balliol College, Oxford, Examination in lieu of Responsions; Honour School of History, First Class, B.A., 1888.

Rev. P. L. C. Nash, Bishop Hatfield's Hall, Durham; Matriculation; First year's Examination in Arts, 1887; Final Examination for Degree of B.A., Cambridge.

Rev. R. Jenkins, University College, Durham; Matriculation; First year's Examination, 1886; Final Examination for Degree of B.A., 1887; Licentiate in Theology, 1888.

Rev. A. Constable, Bishop Hatfield's Hall, Durham; Matriculation; First year's Theological Examination, 1887; Second year's Theological Examination, 1888; Final Examination for B.A. Degree.

Rev. T. B. Dowdeswell, Non-Collegiate, Oxford Examination in lieu of Responsions; Moderations, 1888; Honour School of History, Third Class.

A. N. Shaw, Examination in lieu of Responsions, Oxford; Fawcett Memorial Scholar, £42 per annum, June, 1889; additional Subjects for Law Course; Preliminary Law Examination.

S. Dowdeswell, Matriculation in Durham University; B.A., 1892.

Rev. T. Barnard, Examination in lieu of Responsions, Oxford, 1891; Fawcett Scholarship, £42, 1893; Honour Moderations, Third Class, 1893; Second Class Honours, Lit. Hum., 1895; B.A.

P. Lear, Examination in lieu of Responsions, Oxford, 1891; additional Subject for Law Course; B.A., Second Class Honour School of Modern History, 1895.

B. T. Wrench, Dublin; B.A., 1891.

James Smith, Cambridge; B.A., History Tripos, 1894.

P. Hart Dyke, Cambridge; B.A., Second Class History Tripos, 1895.

J. W. Thorburn, Durham; B.A., 1895.

Rev. W. H. Hamilton, Durham; B.A., 1895.

C. E. Cole, Oxford; Responsions, 1893; Pass Moderations, 1894; B.A., 1897.

Rev. R. C. Swayne, Oxford; Responsions, 1894; Pass Moderations, 1895; Fourth Class Theology, B.A., 1898.

G. C. Pope, Oxford; Responsions, 1895; Moderations, 1897; Fourth History, 1899; B.A., 1899.

W. S. C. Palmer, Oxford; Responsions, 1895; Pass Moderations, 1897; B.A., 1899.

W. H. Dixson, Oxford; Responsions, 1895; additional Subject for Law, 1896; Second Class History and B.A., 1899; M.A., 1902.

G. M. Llewellyn, Oxford; Responsions, 1896; Moderations, 1897; Second Class History, 1900.

Rev. A. Dexter, Oxford; Responsions, 1896; Moderations, 1897; Fawcett Scholarship, £42, 1897; Third Class Lit. Hum., 1900.

Rev. J. Swinnerton, Oxford; Responsions, 1898; Moderations, 1899; Third Class Theology, 1901.

F. Lane, Oxford; Responsions, Christmas, 1898; additional Subject for Law, 1899; Second Class Law, 1891.

(It should be noted that Mr. Lane received Two Special Prizes from his College for work done, and obtained his Honour six months before his degree could be granted.)

G. T. M. Barker, Oxford; Examination in lieu of Responsions (with distinction), 1898; Moderations, 1899; First-class English Literature, 1902.

J. F. Warden, Oxford; Responsions, 1900; Fawcett Scholarship, £42, 1901; Second Class Honour Moderations, 1902.

J. G. Smith, Oxford; Responsions, 1900; Moderations, 1901.

John L. Gardner, Selwyn College, Cambridge; 32nd Mathematical Tripos, 1902.

LIST OF MEMBERS OF THE CONFERENCE.

Formal invitations were issued to the following delegates from the various Institutions, and most of them attended one or more of the sessions. Invitations were also issued to over a hundred other persons interested in the Blind, many of whom were present, but the majority of their names are omitted from this already very long list. The names of the Societies with which the delegates are connected are given in brackets after their names, and the following abbreviations are used, viz. :—B.F.B.A., "The British and Foreign Blind Association;" T.C.R.A., "The Association for the Blind in Tottenham Court Road;" I.B.V.S., "The Indigent Blind Visiting Society;" H.T.S., "Home Teaching Society;" and L.S.B., "The London School Board."

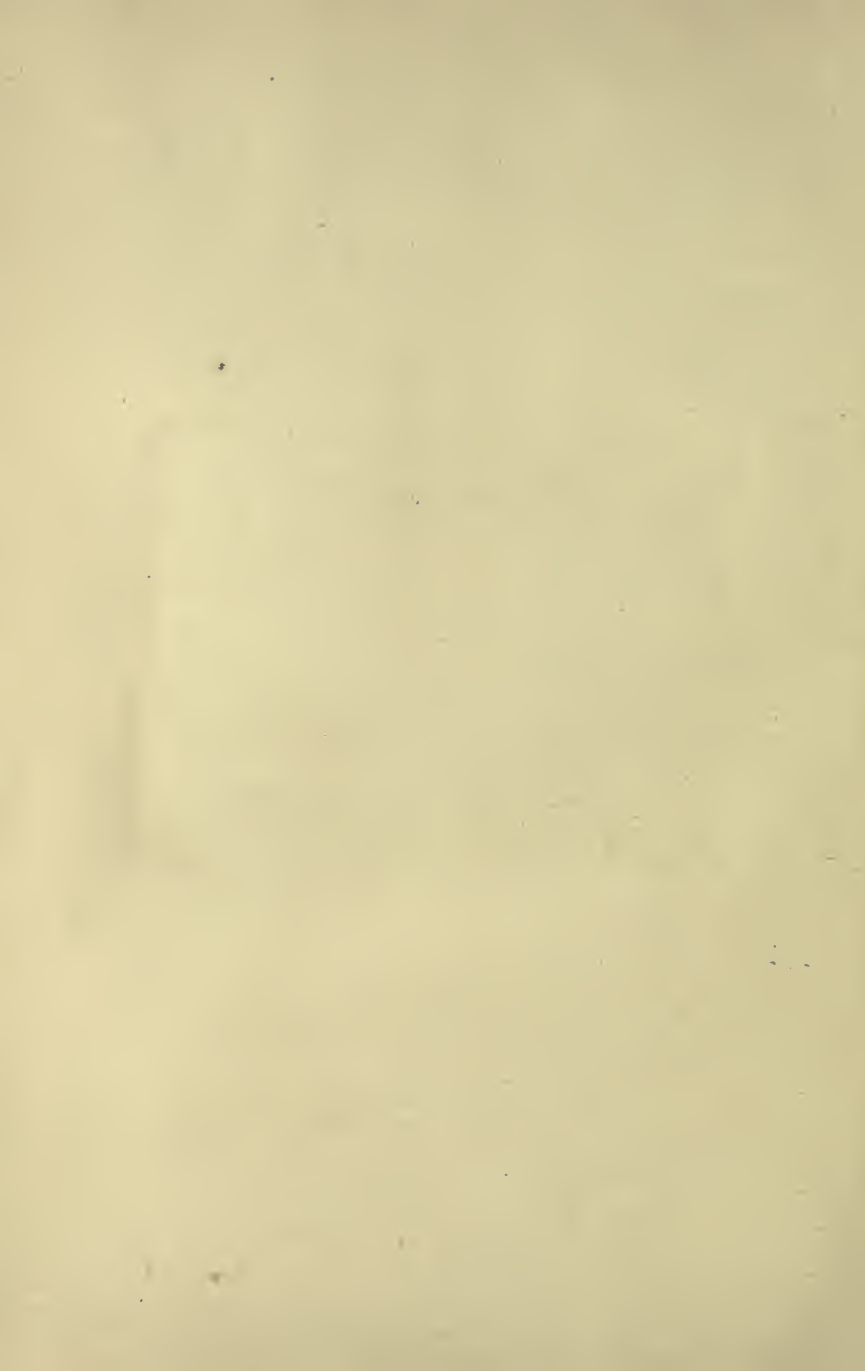
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